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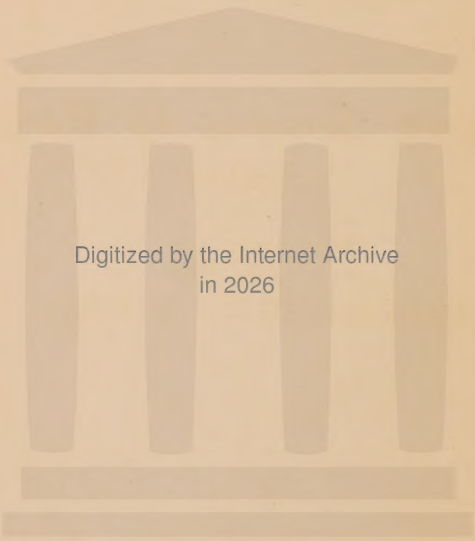
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Modern Sermons by World Scholars

VOLUME VI

MACKINTOSH TO MOORE

MODERN SERMONS
BY
WORLD SCHOLARS

EDITED BY
ROBERT SCOTT AND WILLIAM C. STILES
Editors of *The Homiletic Review*

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Pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn

Pray for the eternal repose of the soul of
Monsignor (Major) [illegible]
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IN TEN VOLUMES
VOLUME VI—MACKINTOSH–MOORE

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MACKINTOSH

THE HIDDEN LIFE

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THE HIDDEN LIFE

THE REV. PROF. H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.PHIL.

"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—Col. 3 : 3.

No one can suppose a saying like this to be addrest indiscriminately to the world at large. The class of persons whom it indicates, the audience who will grasp and appreciate its meaning, is limited in kind. It is not that the text is obscure. It is not that it belongs to an age so far away from ours. It is not that it raises needless barriers. Only it takes for granted that we have passed through a great experience, and that this experience has brought us into a new world. In short, it touches as very few verses even of the Bible do the vital source and center of the Christian life. It tells the open secret of discipleship, and lays its finger on the pulse of personal religion.

Now there is something remarkable in the calmness with which Paul utters this great truth. Is it not one of the plain marks of its higher origin upon the Bible that it speaks of the most stupendous themes with this quiet, assured power, with the composure of eternity? When men get hold of a great idea, or an idea that seems to them great, how they

fret and fume over it, raising such a dust and commotion as if the like of the new theory had never been heard. But few things are more wonderful than the calm, strong tranquillity of the apostles. The message they brought was not a message of their own. The gospel was not their happy discovery. Hence they did not need to claim a place for it with loud protest and urgency, as tho jealous that their voices should be drowned amid the countless voices of the world. It was the truth of God; so that their simple duty was to make it known, and it would do its own work and bear its own witness. With the same quiet, sure restraint of tone Paul says to his readers now: "Your life is hid with Christ in God." He is so certain of it that he needs no appeal or argument. For him the Christian's hidden life is a thing so real and substantial that proof may be dispensed with. Like the beauty of the sunlight, like the sweet freshness of morning, it is not an inference at all; it is the clear presupposition on which everything rests. It is the great immovable fact on which we take our stand, and look out from it with settled faith over the moving scene of the world and up to the glory that shall follow.

We have a wonderful proof of the power of Christianity to touch hearts and change lives in the fact that Paul should have felt it possible to write thus to people whose home was

Colossæ. Colossæ was no worse, perhaps, than the average Asian city of the time, but it can hardly have been much better. And a few years before the idea of sending a message like this to any of the inhabitants of the place would have been a sad irony. So it was a year or two back, but mark the difference now. In the meantime, the gospel of Christ had come, and the tide of its power and joy was flowing thro their lives. All things had become new. They were risen with Christ now, and the very springs of their being were hid with Him in God. Once their life had no hidden depths about it at all; it had all been shallow, specious, concerned with the surface only, busy about things that mattered little, infinitely occupied with trifles, running to waste pathetically over poor and passing aims. But the grace of God had called them, as it calls us. into a new life. In that old barren experience wells had been sunk, and now fountains of living water were springing up clear and fresh. Mines of infinite wealth had been opened in what before had seemed an unprofitable land, and the gold and precious stones of faith and hope and love were being yielded now. Once they had been content with a poor, starveling, hand-to-mouth morality, always precarious, always unequal to any sharp and sudden strain; but to-day their best stores of power, and their deepest springs of joy, were away far and beyond the reach of

sorrow or temptation, because held and guarded by Christ in the unseen.

Believers leave the old life behind them. "Ye are dead," Paul says to these Colossians; or even, as it is in stricter accuracy, "ye died." Sometimes the passage of a soul into the kingdom of God is like the flight of a bird in its swiftness. It arrives as the revolution of a moment. "Within ten paces, as I walked, life was transformed to me," says one to whom the change had happened thus. We lie down some night our old selves, and ere we sleep again the great disclosure has broken on the soul. Yet in itself the text says nothing of this suddenness. It speaks of an event in the past; it does not describe it as either swift or slow. Men may die swiftly, and men may die slowly; it matters nothing, when they have wakened on "the immortal side of death." When the ship comes to the equator, no visible line is there which all see as they cross over; yet in point of fact the crossing is made; they pass from the one hemisphere into the other. So when God's eye reads our past many things stand clear before Him which it was not given to us to perceive. He has watched the rise and progress of our life in Christ from the beginning. And where to our eyes there showed nothing but a gentle imperceptible advance, He, it well might be, may discern a cleavage, sharp as though made by a scimitar, between the old life and the new.

The best metaphor to illustrate this change that Paul can think of, is the passage from one world to another which we name death.

You see the thought which is moving in his mind. Union to Christ Jesus produces a moral and spiritual transfiguration analogous to death and resurrection. At death the soul does not cease to be; rather by the great transition it enters a new environment, like the buds rising through the sod in spring. Just so in regeneration the soul does not lose its identity, but its attachment to Christ lifts it into a new and higher realm. He died for sin —to break its power, to undo the awful ruin, to rectify the wrong: we, through Him, die to sin, in response to His holiness, caught up and borne on by His power, compelled by His love. It is not that we become sinless. We are under no such delusion. But whatever sin remains, we still may have the glad and honest certainty that our fixed desire and choice are now one in will with the will of Jesus Christ. He has made us new creatures, in whom the tyranny of sin is broken. He has given us a new self, the only self worth having or worth keeping. And formidable as the world, the flesh, and the devil are, we know that from this time on there is a Brother beside us in the battle, and a Presence within us that will be ours for ever and ever. So through Him, lives that were so hopeless will become blest; the barren will become fruitful,

and the weak strong. The old life dies on the birthday of faith.

Brethren, surely it is a great thing to have this settled once for all. The old life is dead; its day is over. The channels in which its waters used of old to flow may still at times seem to run as freely as ever; but the parent spring is failing, and one day it will have ceased, to flow no more again. You who have the new heart, but are sadly oppressed by the old, remember that. Do not say that the conflict avails nothing. If holiness and faith in you have never ceased to wrestle with sin and doubt, it is the greatest triumph you could win. And besides, the battle is not to be unending. Your hour of victory, final and complete, and drawing ever nearer, is marked for you on God's plan. Some day—as surely as once you crossed the line that severs Christ from sin, and chose your side with Him for ever—some day you will overcome, and the crown of perfect righteousness will be set upon your head.

Note, secondly, the Christian's hidden life. "Your life is hid with Christ." There is something in every true disciple, even the meekest and plainest, which it would tax the wisest onlooker to account for. You cannot explain the Christian character by anything that shows upon the surface. To unveil the secret of it you must go down into the buried depths, beneath a man's common words and

thoughts. Frequently, as you cross a highland moor, you come upon a bright streak of green, winding in and out among the heather, its pure and shining verdure in strange relief against the dull brown of its surroundings. What can it be, you ask? How came it there? Whence rises the sap to feed this soft ribband of elastic turf? There is a tiny stream below; a rill of sweet water flowing down there out of sight, only hinting its presence by the greenness and beauty above. So the springs of Christian life are hidden—hidden with Christ in God.

For one thing, they are hidden from the unchristian world; but I will not speak much of this. Something mysterious and inscrutable must always appear to a man of the world in those who live by faith in the Son of God. He may merely wonder at the mystery, or he may resent it, but he is always conscious of its presence. And when he asks himself how personal religion is to be accounted for, any explanation but the right one often will suffice. Fear, self-interest, hoary tradition, weak delusion—we know the theories by which outsiders have sought to explain Christian faith, and by the explanation to rob it of its power. It has always been their plan. Even of the Master they whispered, "He is beside himself"; and of the apostles, with the fire and life of Pentecost throbbing in their veins, they deemed it enough to say, "These men are full

of new wine." All that the believer can plead—and how much it is!—of aid sent him in temptation, or light that visits him in darkness, or consolations that draw the poison out of bitter grief, is counted a tale of little meaning. The existence of all that deep life is not perceived. The Christian secret is a secret from the world.

But more than this may be said. There is some profounder meaning here. For my text declares, or, at least, it implies, does it not, that a believer's deepest life is somehow a secret from himself? Is this not so at the origin and birth of religion in the soul, when the Spirit quickens the dead to life? "The wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth"—thou canst not tell; no, not tho it be in thy heart that it is blowing! Regeneration makes us God's in a deeper fashion than we dream. And if it be so at the first, it is so ever after. To-day men of science are obviously moving about in worlds not realized, among half-comprehended forces which only now and then flash an isolated token of their nature into the realm of knowledge. Do we not see that the same holds good of the experience of every true believer in Christ? He sees and loves the fruits that spring from fellowship with God, and in his own heart he knows the joy of it; but the roots go far down out of sight. He

is conscious that God is offering him grace and love each day, and bringing him to respond with trust and longing; but how the two, the grace and trust, meet and mingle in his soul, he cannot tell. He knows that communion with God sets his mind perfectly at rest, and that this strange inward power is never so effectual as just in the midst of distress; but the rationale of it all is beyond him. He can feel the power of Christ resting upon him, raising him above himself, turning his very weakness into strength; but how it comes to pass he knows not, or as little as he does the relations of soul and body. He can say what the causes are, he cannot say how the causes work. His life in Christ, at its deepest, is hidden in a measure from himself.

What is this but to say that the sources of our very life are in Christ's keeping, not in ours? He guards for us the springs of faith and love. The reservoir in which our supplies are stored is yonder, not here; and enough for each day's necessity is given. All that Christ has, He has for those who love Him; and one sometimes imagines that His greatest sorrow, if perchance He sorrows still, must be that we draw upon Him so sparingly, with the fear lest we are asking too much. Cases of hallucination have been known in which men who had a fortune in the bank dreamed they were paupers, and could hardly be got to draw a check for the essentials of

life; and one is reminded of them now and then by our own neglect of the treasures laid up in Jesus Christ. Never judge of your Redeemer's grace and power by what you have yet received from Him. Had you suffered Him, He would have done far more. And if He has not done it, the reason always is not that Christ is less bountiful than we believed, but that our heart is much shallower and our faith far less open and simple than it might be.

But if a Christian is thus in direct correspondence with the infinite nature of Christ, it follows that he is a man with great reserves of power. Like some great commercial houses, which have the more in the warehouse the less there is of open display, a believing life is a far richer thing than it seems. You have noticed how the secret of the charm and power of certain pictures lies in the suggestion they give of a wide, illimitable background, in which eye and fancy lose themselves as we gaze; and the same subtle impression clings about everyone whose character is rooted in the love of God. God in Christ is the great background of the life of faith. Yet how often worldly men have taken a simple, quiet Christian at an utterly false valuation, and deemed him weak because he is unpretending. They gathered round him with their promises and threats, looking for his fall as a thing of course; yet within that soul

there were hidden stores of fearless power they never dreamed of, and the foiled assault drew back as harmless as the waves that fall from the rock shattered into spray. What is the reason? It is that his life is hid with Christ in God. He has access, and we all have access, to the comforts of a love so deep and broad and high that it passeth knowledge. And the task of the Christian is so to walk before men that they shall say: "There must be springs in such a life. That steady, sustained gladness and peace could not be without roots somewhere." Thus the experience that came from Christ must be employed to point men back to Christ again, and the circle of believing witness return to glorify Him who made it what it is.

Then, besides that, the sources of our life, thus being hid in Christ, are protected against dispeace and trouble. Here, it is true, we must distinguish between what goes on upon the surface and that which is passing in the depths. Take the experience of any Christian man, and even after a close study you might be tempted to think it very like that of anyone else. The believer is not spared the common vicissitudes of life. Like his neighbor, he must enter the struggle of business and bear its disappointments. He, too, may know what it is to labor long in hope, and wait in vain for the harvest that never comes. He, too, must bear the pain of suspense and daily

care, and perplexity of conscience, and fear for those he loves. He, too, may feel the weight of the dread law of God which rends loving hearts asunder and makes havoc of our plans. All this is true, and more; it is the common lot of man. But yet, let us remember with thankfulness and proclaim it with joy—this, tho it were multiplied and intensified a hundredfold, need not touch the true life seated in the depths of the heart. The storm may rage upon the coast, yet not a breath of its fury reach the sequestered valley that sleeps in the bosom of the hills. The ocean surface may be torn and buffeted by billows that race from shore to shore, and all the while the untroubled depths be still. And just so, amid his cares and occupations, and even his adversity, the believer may have a mind at perfect peace; for his life, his true life, the life that really makes the man, is hid with Christ in God. And this is our unspeakable privilege, this is the perpetual miracle we may put in force, that it is open to us to fall back upon this indestructible peace. In a moment, without a sound, wherever we are, we can pass from the street into the sanctuary, from the world into the presence of our Lord; and there find our true life, calm and safe with Him.

The life that is hid with Christ is not to be hidden for ever. It is hidden thus, because Christ is yonder and we are here. But like

the bud that sleeps in its sheath and waits for the call of the spring, the life of the man of faith is big with promise. One day the secret will be out. The vestments that wrapt it round will be taken off, for the present is but a stage that passes. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.

Take an instance. Take the life of one of our countrymen in India. Soldier perhaps, or missionary, or merchant, he labors on with brain and hand, doing his work as only a true man can. But his home—his home is in Scotland. Those he loves best of all are there; and where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. He would scorn to neglect his duty; yet all the time his true life is circling not round the routine of his station, but round his home far away. And often, as he rides from post to post his thoughts go a-wandering over the sea to some cottage on the hill where his children are, and he hears them shout in their play amid the heather and the bracken, or sees the mother stooping over them as they sleep. It is an inner life unperceived by those around him, but from it rise all but the very highest incentives of brave and honest manhood. And as he toils and labors on, it is with a great hope that the day will come when, foreign service over, he will go back to his home. And then, and ever after, what used to be only the private luxury of quiet thought

will, please God, be the open and endless interest of every hour and every day.

Is there one of us who does not feel this to be only a parable of the Christian life? We give thanks to God for the supplies of love and grace that are ours now; we bless the good hand that gives them, and we strive to use them for His glory. But all the while the thought is uppermost with us that something better—far better—is yet to be revealed. Not that we should long for death, not that, in our haste, we should call the world a barren, weary desert. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and the time and the coming of death we gladly leave to the secret love of God. But more and more, if we are Christians at all, we are coming to be sure, and ever surer, that God has kept the best to the last. Here we draw from the stream, but one day we shall stand by the very fountain-head. We shall leave the foreign land, and travel to God, who is our home.

Our life is hidden now, because Christ is hidden; hidden, not in darkness, but in the light where He dwells with the Father. It is better that it should be so, is it not? It is better that our stores and treasures should be outside of ourselves. Yes, and every new gift that comes from Christ, every new grasp of His hand, every reminder of His love, only stirs us to think how much He has laid up in store for the trusting heart, awaiting the dis-

closure of the great day. How deep and broad must be the ocean of that hidden life and love, when out of it flows this clear, deep river, so full of water, making glad the city of God!

M'CAIG

GOD'S SUCCESSFUL SERVANT

ARCHIBALD M'CAIG

PRINCIPAL of Pastors' College, London, since 1898; born March 31, 1852, at Bridge of Earn, Perthshire, Scotland; brought up in Cowdenbeath, Fifeshire; began to preach in 1869; colporteur at Offord in Huntingdonshire, 1874, under Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association, and pastor of Baptist church; a year later took the oversight of the church at Buckden in conjunction with Offord; entered Pastors' College, 1879; in 1880 sent by C. H. Spurgeon as student-pastor to Strathearn; settled there in 1881; in 1884 went to Brannoxtown in County Kildare, Ireland, there pursued university studies, taking B.A. and LL.B degrees at the Royal University; secretary to the Irish Baptist Association and editor of Magazine, becoming president in 1892; classical tutor at Pastors' College, 1892; LL.D., 1895; author of "How I Became a Christian and a Baptist," "The Grand Old Book," etc.

GOD'S SUCCESSFUL SERVANT

PRIN. A. M'CAIG, D.D., LL.D.

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."—Isaiah 52 : 13.

THESE words stand at the commencement of the most evangelical portion of this most evangelical prophecy. That the person here spoken of is the Messiah there can be no reasonable doubt. Upon no other hypothesis can the words be explained. The Jewish rabbis have generally applied them to Christ paraphrasing them thus: "He shall be higher than Abram, more elevated than Moses and exalted above the ministering angels." We have New Testament authority for applying them to Jesus. It was here the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when Philip accosted him. It was concerning the One here depicted that he asked "of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or some other man?" and the evangelist satisfactorily answered his question by beginning at the same Scripture and preaching unto him Jesus.

The prophet has been addressing Zion, speaking comfortably to the Jerusalem Church, but now "a change comes over the spirit of his dream" and before him stands

not the Church, but the Church's head, not Zion but Zion's King. He tunes his harp to a higher key and gives forth loftier music than he has yet attempted. The sufferings and glory of the Messiah form his theme and with such a theme the meanest strains might well be transfigured with celestial beauty. But it is no unskilled hand that strikes that harp, 'tis no cold heart that conceives that melody! 'Tis Isaiah, the royal prophetic bard of Israel, and 'tis Isaiah with every power of heart and imagination set on fire by the divine Spirit. This verse may be considered as an epitome, as well as the beginning of the poem that closes with the fifty-third chapter. The first burst is glorious, but as he recounts the humiliation that precedes the exaltation, as he describes the path of shame that leads to place of glory, the strain sinks into a mournful plaint marvelous in its heartstirring power, anon he takes a higher flight and exultingly proclaims the unrivaled glories of the once suffering but now reigning Christ.

We are here called upon to behold Christ performing His work—Christ receiving His reward. It is as God's servant that He works. "Behold my servant." Jehovah is the speaker—Jehovah is the great Master of the universe. He claims, and has a right to claim, all things and all beings as His servants. The rising sun goes forth at His command. At His bidding the clouds gather, the thunders

roll, the lightnings flash. The hoary ocean, unfettered by mortal power, scorning the lashes of one monarch, laughing at the commands of another, is yet obedient as a slave to Him who hath said, " Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shalt thy proud waves be stayed." " Fire and hail, snow and vapors, stormy winds fulfil His word; mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, creeping things " and all flying fowl, men, angels and even devils; all are His servants.

But of all His servants there is none so glorious, none so worthy of admiration, none so much the object of His complacence as Jesus Christ. To Him again and again in this prophecy does Jehovah point, saying: " Behold my servant." The idea that Christ in His atoning work was the servant of God is often overlooked, or at least is not kept so prominently in view as the Bible puts it. It is a glorious fact, that when " He made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant," it was that He might " minister and give his life a ransom for many " and He was among men " as one that serveth," living and dying for their good, working out their eternal salvation. But while we dwell with wonder and gratitude upon this blessed aspect of His work, we should beware of being selfishly engrossed in it to the exclusion of other and perhaps higher

aspects of that work. In all His work Christ was God's servant. He came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. The primary object of His coming into the world was not to save sinners, but to glorify God. It is blessedly true that the two things, in fact, are inseparable. In glorifying God He secured our salvation. But still we can separate them in thought, and doing so it is not difficult to see that the glory of God must be the primary object of the Saviour's work. "Man's chief end was to glorify God." Through his sin he failed to fulfil the end of his being. God was dishonored, His law broken, His authority defied, His claims set at nought. Now it was necessary that reparation should be made, that the divine glory should be vindicated. Had it been otherwise God might have saved man without the atonement of a mediator. But this could not be. There must first be "Glory to God in the highest" before there could be "peace on earth and goodwill to men."

So, in order that salvation might be brought nigh to us, Christ had to stoop to the servant's place to glorify God by His life and satisfy all the claims of justice by His death. Leaving the glory, His language is: "Lo I come to do thy will," and all through life He was about his Father's business, His lifelong motto being "I must work the works of him that sent me." It was most fitting that in the place

where God had been dishonored, He should be glorified, that in the place where His law had been broken and despised, it should be obeyed, " magnified and made honorable," that as the sons of men had gone astray from the path of His commandments a son of man should walk undefiled in that way. With Christ the Father was ever well pleased. His whole life yielded a sweet-smelling savor unto God, and at its close He could say, " I have glorified thee on the earth."

He does His work well. " My servant shall deal prudently," or act wisely. The translation of the margin " he shall prosper " is considered by some to be a better rendering of the Hebrew word. They are somewhat led to this meaning by what follows. Others, however, think that our version is more correct; it is the usual meaning of the word and as we have the prosperity in the next clause it seems better to keep to the primary meaning—" act wisely." Even those who think it should be " prosper " admit that it is prosperity gained through intelligent labor, so that we are brought back to the original idea and are justified in referring these words to the work which leads to the prosperity of the next clause. How truly does this language describe the conduct of our Redeemer. He ever acted wisely—as the God-man He was the very embodiment of wisdom, and looking at any part of His great work we see that it was well and

wisely done. The work which Christ undertook required the utmost skill. To glorify God by obeying His laws, and to work out a righteousness for man was no trifling task. To remove the sin that dishonored God and as a mighty barrier stood in the way of man's salvation was no easy matter. There are some works so important, so difficult of performance that they are only entrusted to the most skilled workmen. It isn't any novice in architecture that can be entrusted with the erection of a "St. Paul's Cathedral," it requires a Christopher Wren. It isn't any paltry rhymer who can write a "Paradise Lost," it requires a John Milton. The work set before Christ is out of all comparison the most wonderful of all works—creation is nothing to it—a word of His lips could bring that about. Redemption must be a lifelong task involving the most amazing humiliation and unparalleled sufferings. But all that had to be done Christ did and did in the most perfect manner. Do we behold Him in conflict with the enemy of souls? How wisely does He act! How gloriously does He triumph! See the fiend approach strong in his infernal skill, confident in the gathered experience of centuries, eager to overcome this second man as he had the first. Mark the Saviour's condition; in want and weakness through His forty days' fast; isolated from all his friends, in the wilderness with no companion save the wild

beasts. Who that had any knowledge of Satan's power and of man's weakness but would have thought the tempter sure of an easy victory. With Satanic sagacity and skill he tries every weapon that before had stood him in such good stead in his attacks on men. But calmly, in the unfaltering confidence of His integrity the Christ of God awaits the onslaught, parries every blow, wards off every dart. Ah! Satan, thou hast met thy match this time. It is no frail Eve or wavering Adam with whom thou art now dealing. There is no loose joint in His heaven made armor, there is no vulnerable spot in this Achilles. " The baffled prince of hell " retires to the darkness of his den, while the Father seeing how wisely His glorious Son had acted sends a band of angels to minister to His wants.

Do we consider this divine Servant as a teacher, fulfilling His work as Prophet, revealing to men the character of God, unfolding to them heavenly mysteries? There is the same perfection manifest. How well He understands the needs of His audience; how wisely He adapts His words to their understanding; how thoroughly He holds the multitude spellbound by His marvelous eloquence. Little children flock to His knees and look with confidence into His eyes of love. Publicans and sinners draw near to listen to the gracious words proceeding from His lips.

The common people hear Him gladly, while those who have the temerity to cavil at His teaching and engage Him in dispute are silenced by the force of His replies and covered with confusion. The testimony of His enemies and in that testimony all His friends join, is "Never man spake like this man." Are we occupied with Him as obeying the law of God? How well is that work done! No half-hearted obedience does He render, no passing over some duties as trivial, no obtruding of His holiness before men, no mere outward observance of commands. His obedience was perfect—perfect in kind, perfect in extent. The keenest eye, yea the eye of God could see no fault in Him. You may find spots on the sun, but there is no spot in this Son of righteousness. The heavens may not be pure in the sight of God, but He finds no impurity in Him. He may charge His angels with folly, but of this holy Servant, He must ever say "He acts wisely."

Thus might we look at every part of His work and see the same divine wisdom manifested. Through all His miracles it shines, in His contact with enemies it is conspicuous; in His dealings with friends and disciples it is apparent.

If we could we would like to gaze upon Him as He performs the most marvelous part of His work, the bearing the wrath of God, the putting away of our sin. But this is a work

that baffles our comprehension. We cannot pierce the gloom that enshrouds Him in Gethsemane, yet a glimmer of light shows us the divine Man almost appalled at the magnitude of the task, but a following flash enables us to see Him strengthening Himself in God, fully prepared "to seize our dreadful right, the load sustain, and heave the mountain from a guilty world." Our vision cannot penetrate the mysteries of Calvary. We cannot comprehend the transfer of sin to Him or the outpouring of divine indignation. We cannot conceive His soul agony, His terrible torture. But we feel assured that He has done all that was required as only a God-man could. We know He has borne our sin; we know He has endured God's wrath; we know He has made peace by the blood of His cross. And as we hear Him cry "It is finished," we can sing with joyful hearts, "He has done all things well." To Him we can apply His own words in a far higher sense than to any other: "Well done thou good and faithful servant." At the crucifixion as certainly as at His baptism and transfiguration Jehovah can say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Well might He, looking through the ages to this unparalleled transaction, exclaim through the lips of His prophet, "Behold my servant shall deal prudently."

Although these words have had their fulfilment in His life and death, there is yet a

sense in which they are being fulfilled. In reference to His saving and blessing sinners, to His guiding and perfecting His saints, to His managing the affairs of His kingdom, we may still say, He acts wisely, He deals prudently.

Let us consider Christ receiving His reward. There are three words used to indicate this reward. He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. The second word which we generally understand as referring to praise seems rather to be held here in its original literal meaning—" lifted up "—at least the word for which it is translated means to be lifted up. One commentator marking the distinction between the three words says, they yield this meaning, " He will rise up, He will raise Himself still higher, He will stand on high." Another adopting a similar interpretation says, " There is a climax here in these words, each expressing a higher degree of exaltation than the other—the first to be set upright, the second to be raised from the ground, the third to be lifted up very high." So that taking this view I would venture to apply them to Christ's resurrection, His ascension and His sitting at the right hand of God, or His glorification.

The resurrection of Christ is at once the reward of His work and the proof of its accomplishment. It is the proof inasmuch as God thereby declares that He is satisfied with what

Christ has done. The claims made during His life are thereby vindicated, no impostor could have triumphed over the tomb, nor could God have thus signified His approval of one whose whole life was a lie. But the resurrection is more than this, it is part of the reward of His toil; it is a portion of the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the cross; it is the beginning of that glory which as Mediator He was to possess. Men having done their worst, the Redeemer's body is laid in the grave, but in prospect of that dark hour, He thus expresses His joyful confidence: "My flesh shall rest in hope because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption."

He knew that the reward was at hand, and when all was accomplished the Father was not slow to fulfil the conditions of the glorious covenant. Very early on that third morning does He send His messengers to unlock the prison gates and lead His matchless Servant into liberty. How often do the apostles declare that God raised Jesus from the dead, frequently putting God's action in contrast with men's, as "Him ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up;" "Ye killed the prince of life, whom God hath raised up." Men by putting Him to death said, this fellow is not fit to live, He is a blasphemer, He is the ob-

ject of God's displeasure. God, by raising Him said, "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." Ought not Christ to have suffered and to enter into His glory? The glory is a necessary consequence of the suffering. The suffering was the necessary prelude to the glory. How often it is so in God's universe. You bury the little bulb in the dark earth and it seems the ruin of it, but soon it emerges from the gloom, and blooms in all the beauty of a new life. The gladsome spring follows gloomy winter. The evening and the morning in God's reckoning make the day.

It was not enough that Christ should be raised from the dead. He must be extolled, lifted higher, taken up into heaven, and so in due time His ascension takes place. Having given to His disciples full proof of His resurrection, having unfolded to them all that He purposed of the mysteries of the kingdom, He gathers them around Him at Olivet, and after a few farewell words, He gives them His parting blessing, mounts His cloudy chariot, and majestically ascends to the court of heaven. Christ is sometimes represented as rising from the dead and ascending to glory, by virtue of His own inherent power. But both transactions are also regarded as the work of God. We have seen how the Scriptures which declare that God raised Him abundant also in the testimony that God exalted Him. "He

was received up into heaven." "He was carried up into heaven." "Being by the right hand of God him hath God exalted with his right hand." And that this is part of His reward is clearly shown by the apostle in the Epistle to the Philippians, when after speaking of the humiliation that Christ had undergone, he says: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him." What a time of exultation must that have been for the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem when our Lord as a victor approached the battlements. His attending angels, eager to have Him in His rightful place, cry: "Lift up your heads O ye gates and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." And to the inquiry that comes from within, "Who is this King of glory," they rapturously give the answer, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." In old Roman times it was considered a special distinction for the king or general, with his own hand to slay the leader of the opposing army and to present his arms as spoils to the gods. Our King had met in conflict the prince of darkness and had completely vanquished him and now—"Ye angel guards like flames divide and give the King of glory way," for

> "He subdued the powers of hell,
> In the fight He stood alone,
> All His foes before Him fell,
> By His single arm o'erthrown.

His the fight, the arduous toil,
His the honor of the day;
His the glory and the spoil,
Jesus bears them all away."

He is sitting at the right hand of God. He is made very high. The words denote the position into which the resurrection and ascension have brought Him. It was not enough that He should be raised and taken to heaven. "He must be made very high." The words are most emphatic and indicate the superlative glory that He has acquired. God has not only rewarded Him with a place in heaven but He has given Him the place of highest honor. He has "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet"; angels and authorities and powers being made subject under Him.

Yes, He whose name was a byword of shame below, has now "a name that is above every name." He who "for a little was made lower than the angels," has been "crowned with glory and honor," "being made so much better than the angels as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." He who in the boundlessness of His love for the lost "descended into the lower parts of the earth" hath ascended up far

above all heavens that he might fill all things. Yes! " the highest place that heaven affords, is His, is His by right." In this all His people rejoice, by faith they can see " the glories of the Lamb amid the Father's throne "; and triumphantly sing " The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now."

But after all how imperfectly do we comprehend His glory. Our mortal eyes cannot bear the sight. Paul was struck blind by the glory of the light that shone from His presence, and John the beloved disciple, who had reclined on His bosom and enjoyed the most intimate fellowship with Him, when favored with a glimpse of His glory, falls at His feet as dead. Ah! John had seen the Son of righteousness when obscured by the clouds of humanity, but the Sun shining in His strength utterly overpowers him.

As we think of the high position of Christ let us remember that He occupies it by virtue of His atoning work. As God He was infinitely glorious before His humiliation, but He is now glorified as the divine Servant, the God-man, the Mediator; and not only is He glorious in His person and position, but also in His saving power. He is a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. " All power is given unto him in heaven and on earth," and the first use He makes of that power is to send forth His disci-

ples with a message of mercy to sinners. He is not only enthroned but He sitteth as a priest upon His throne and is building the spiritual temple. He will ever bear the glory.

We have thus tried to consider the historical fulfilment of these wondrous words. We have marked the three stages of His exaltation as already accomplished. Let us now briefly notice the spiritual and continual fulfilment. It is a cause of rejoicing to every Christian heart that Jesus has already been exalted and extolled and made very high, but we look for a more glorious exaltation. He has after all only entered into His glory. He is yet to see the perfect fruition of His soul travail and be fully satisfied. His humiliation has indeed yielded a rich harvest of glory. The first fruits have already been presented to Him. He has through these centuries been reaping the precious fruits of His passion; but the glorious feast of ingathering is yet future. Every soul saved by His gospel, every saint sanctified by His Spirit, every victory won by His church, increases His glory, adds to His reward, lifts Him higher, and so shall it be till all His ransomed ones are saved from sin and gathered into glory. The prophetic words of the Baptist remain true and daily receive their fulfilment. "He must increase." These words are but the echo of a strain from the same harp that gave forth the sound of our text, "of the increase of his gov-

ernment shall be no end." He reigns and will reign till all are subdued to Him. To Him, the Father hath decreed that "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord." Even in this sin-curst earth He shall be manifestly exalted and extolled and made very high. The world is His by right, by purchase and by conquest. The heathen have been given Him for His inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. He has been "made the head of the heathen, and a people not known shall serve him, as soon as they hear of him, they shall obey, the strangers shall submit themselves unto him." As His heralds proclaim His approaching kingdom the rebels shall surrender and yield Him grateful homage and so shall His revenue of glory increase until the whole of His destined dominion shall acknowledge His sway, and give Him His well won meed of glory. There is something very pleasing in the thought that in the very world where He bore the cross, He shall wear the crown; that in the place where He was covered with shame, He shall be clothed with glory; that where He was despised, rejected and lightly esteemed, "he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high." This ought to be, this must be, this will be. Unbelief says "How can this thing be? It is impossible." Faith replies "ye do greatly err not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God." William Burns gave a right

answer to the lady who asked him what were his prospects of success in China, when he said, "Bright as the promises of God." Even so, and according to these promises "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." "He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high."

"Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing.
For He shall have dominion,
O'er river, sea and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion,
Or dove's light wing can soar."

Nor shall this poor globe alone "be filled with his glory," but the whole universe to its utmost bounds, shall overflow with the praise of our glorified Lord.

McCLURE

EMPHASIS ON THE AFFIRMATIVE

JAMES G. K. McCLURE

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EMPHASIS ON THE AFFIRMATIVE

PRES. JAMES G. K. MCCLURE, D.D., LL.D.

"He healed all that were sick."—Matt. 8 : 16

IT is through emphasis that we influence our fellows. The monotone is never listened to for any length of time: it has in it no power to stir another's soul and rouse it to action. Only when a man, in speech or in conduct, puts special energy into his expression can he awaken the attention of the careless and fire cold hearts. It was the emphasis St. Bernard placed upon his assertion, "The Holy Sepulcher must be rescued!" that awakened Europe and brought about the Crusades.

It is through emphasis, also, that we manifest our individuality. Forceful individuality cannot exist apart from emphasis. We become mere ciphers as soon as all things to us are equally important or equally unimportant. Our glory lies in our having our own personal convictions, our own personal enthusiasms and our own personal determinations. These personal possessions are our distinction, our reason for being; they justify our existence. By means of them we reveal ourselves to our fellows, and we bring to the world our special contribution to its thought and welfare. Emphasis thus becomes our distinctive sphere,

and our opportunity. It was his emphasis upon his devotion to liberty that enabled Patrick Henry to show what manner of man he was and to voice his soul in the terms of patriotism.

In the choice of emphasis we need to be discriminating. All sorts of ideals, standards and visions rise up before us. Some are safe, some dangerous. On what are we to place emphasis so that we make no mistake in shaping our own lives, or in influencing the lives of others? The question is far-reaching; it has in it the making or the unmaking of character, the weal or the wo of society.

What says Christ to the question? His answer is this: "Notice the things on which I place emphasis and see if a general principle of emphasis may be deduced from my methods."

Christ placed emphasis on courage, not cowardice; on purity, not lust; on peace, not discord; on hope, not despair.

There is one nature common to all these qualities that Christ emphasized: the nature of the affirmative, the constructive. The principle of emphasis Christ thus would teach us is "emphasis on the affirmative." Accordingly we find as we proceed to the consideration of His courses of action that this principle is recognized, and even asserted, by every feature of His life.

In speaking of Himself, it is always in

affirmative tones: "I am the way," "I am the door," "I am the light of the world," "I am the resurrection and the life." Whenever He speaks of His mission, that mission is declared to be the giving of life, and the giving of it more abundantly; the opening of prison doors, the delivering of captives and the healing of the broken-hearted. He found the blind, and He made them see; the deaf, and He made them hear; the lame, and He made them walk. The ignorant He taught, the suffering He comforted, and the wandering He searched out.

When it came time to send forth those who were apostolically commissioned to continue His work in the ages, He charged them to bring new joys to human hearts, and to recover the world to health and gladness. Everywhere they were to bestow a benediction.

Thus in word and in deed, in spirit and in instruction Christ placed emphasis on constructive things, passing beyond judgment to helpfulness, beyond the detection of evil to the relief of evil, beyond the discovery of error to the provision of truth.

This principle of emphasis on the affirmative is noticeable both for its effect on the individual and for its effect on society. In the individual it develops self-mastery, self-growth and self-ennoblement. Nothing in this world is easier to cherish than the censorious

spirit, nor easier to utter than the censorious word. Our fellow-creatures are weak and imperfect. There is not one of them unexposed to sharp criticism by reason of his many foibles. Besides, our own natures often have within them the taints of jealousy and envy, and we readily see, and magnify, the imperfections in our comrades' characters, and in their writings and speeches. Once more, carping criticism loves to show off. The very spirit that animated Don Quixote when he posed before Sancho Panza, many times animates ourselves as, full-booted and spurred, we exhibit our wit against the productions of our associates. And the more scholarly, refined and highly attuned we are, the quicker we recognize the lack, whatever it may be, in our comrades. That man must be a self-master who will not allow himself to be swept along the line of least resistance, of speaking his first inclination in condemnation, but who restrains that inclination, who brings it into subjection to love, and who patiently awaits the hour when he unselfishly may express his matured consideration in actual helpfulness.

During the civil war, Abraham Lincoln had many misgivings as to the prospects and policy of the administration—both in camp and in Congress. But he never told the public one of these misgivings. To have published them would have been easy, and would have been a bid for sympathy. But to let the

nation have an inkling of these misgivings would have been perilous. To withhold these misgivings and suffer, was heroic and secured safety. Such self-mastery was his that when the war was over he could say, "So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom."

Self-growth also is developed by this principle. When Leonardo da Vinci was asked why he did not go about, telling the people of his day wherein this painter and that sculptor, this architect and that engineer, had failed, he replied: "I criticize by creation." And, lo, as he painted, as he carved his statues, as he erected his buildings and as he constructed his defenses of war, Leonardo—through creation, through betterment of that attempted by others, came to his growth.

To pull down the outer covering of the great pyramid may be done by the rude Arab, to burn the Alexandrian library may be the work of an ignorant fanatic, to find a spot in the sun may be possible even to a little child. But the building of the pyramid, the writing of the Alexandrian library, the creating of the sun, demand profound capacity. As men stretch themselves to forward the world's good, they develop. Dissent has its mission. The man who protests is always needed. Things indeed are not right in the world, and he who refuses to be a part of the established order of wrong must voice himself. But

merely to dissent, merely to find fault, leaves a man stunted forever. Had not the Pilgrim Fathers brought new material to the front and stood for advance steps in learning and in freedom, they to-day would be without recognized place among the world's heroes. John Knox said "No" to Mary; but he said "Yes" to all the rest of Scotland, and through the provision he made for public education and for national betterment he became Scotland's inspiration.

And self-ennoblement waits on this principle. Here is a man who visits a South Sea island. He finds debasement, wretchedness and blank outlook. He truly has done something when he writes an accurate description of these awful conditions—even tho he does so in the spirit of hopelessness; for he has made a certain contribution to ethnic studies, and has increased humanity's knowledge of itself. But it is far different when another man goes to that same island, offers his services of helpfulness to its people, dwells amongst them, creates a written language for them, lifts them up from vice to virtue and makes their hearts to rejoice and blossom as a garden of the Lord.

Constructive work is the most self-expensive work that can possibly be done; it is done at the cost of brain and heart. There is always blood, yes, the blood of the builder himself—mingled with the mortar, when the perma-

nently good is laid, stone by stone, and the edifice of human welfare rises in beauty. It is when the seed that seeks to produce a harvest, falls into the ground and dies that it comes to its glorification; and it is when men in pursuit of the good pour out their energy and devotion like water, that they bring blessings to their fellows and ennoblement to themselves.

In society as well as in the individual this principle accomplishes most desirable results. It answers to the world's need with provision for that need. That it is part of true interest in humanity to uncover sins is certainly true. "If I had not come, ye would not have had sin. Now ye have no cloak for your sin." Every foul spot must be found. Every cause of disease and misery must be ascertained, every error must be probed to its last root. We are to be search commissioners for wrong. Wherever Christ went He uncovered all manner of sickness—both of body and of soul. But humanity needs more than uncovering, more than self-revelation. It needs healing; it needs cheer, and strength, and wisdom. The denial of every falsehood under the sun will not germinate one thought of life. The beauty of Christ was that when He found hunger He fed it; thirst, He gave it drink; sin, He imparted righteousness.

The men who have been its builders are the world's benefactors—the men who have sup-

planted weeds with wheat, who have spanned crevasses with bridges, who have made fearsome electricity a servant of comfort, who have sung the songs that changed night into day, who have put hope into the disconsolate and have added to human life an increment of blessedness.

When now it comes to the practical application of this principle, what shall be its sphere? Its sphere is as wide and inclusive as the worthy activities of man.

Livingstone, at the time he went out to Africa, purposed not alone to uncover its sores, but also to provide everything that should heal those sores. There was a vision in his heart for that ill land: he saw steamers plying on the rivers, commerce developed, railways built, schools filled with youth, courts established, hospitals in operation, churches lifting thought skyward.

Lord John Lawrence, when he assumed civil service in India, purposed that every feature of native life should be advanced: that there should be good agriculture, good roads, good armies, good literature, good laws.

In the physical world, affirmative work is to be done—in the protection of the laborer from dangerous machinery and from diseases that are incident to occupation; in the abolition of child labor; in the safe-guarding of the health of the community; in the gradual and reasonable reduction of toil to the lowest point, so

that there shall be work for all and every one shall have that degree of leisure essential to the highest physical and mental life; in the securing to man release from employment one day in seven and the largest remuneration compatible with general prosperity.

The intellectual world also has its sphere for the application of this principle. It is not enough to write the book that shows the stings of conscience, nor to put upon the stage the play that points the hard way of the transgressor, nor to make clear in education what the tendencies of evil are, and what its results. Literature has not accomplished its end when it leaves the human mind weary and the human heart discouraged. Splendid as such a book as George Eliot's "Romola" is, setting forth the smooth, deceptive, ruinous course of evil—a master-piece of its kind—side by side with "Romola" and as a complement to it must be the book that shows the possibility of another course, a course that calls to manhood, and nobleness and high mission.

Ruskin declared that we should introduce as much beauty into literature as is possible—consistent with truth. "If there are a number of figures we are to make as many of the figures beautiful as the faithful representation of humanity will admit. Not that we are to deny the facts of ugliness, or superiority, of feature—as necessarily manifested in a crowd; but, as far as is in our power, seek for

and dwell on the beauty that is in them, not on the ugliness."

The social world too waits for the application of this principle. There are wrongs on every hand. They invade trade, they lay their hand on banking, they breathe over the gatherings of social pleasure. The ethics of the market place are not satisfactory, the talk of the drawing-room is not inspiring, the manipulation of politics is not elevating.

Everything that is enervating is to be condemned. The denunciator is an ordained John the Baptist whose place and part in the world are divinely ordered. It may be cowardly for us to hold back our rebukes—to fail to cry aloud when we see the sword advancing.

But John Howard is to suggest our method of action. He learned the dreadful condition of the prisons of England. Then he took his wealth, social position and learning, and consecrated them to the amelioration of such conditions. He visited far and wide upon the Continent, he wrote, he proposed legislation, and in due time he brought about the very amelioration that he sought. Nor must it be forgotten that John the Baptist did not stop with denunciation: he pointed to the Deliverer from sin, and he made denunciation merely the awakening to the provisions of salvation.

The spiritual world waits for the application of this principle. The mystery of ex-

istence will never cease. Knowledge only enhances mystery. The deeper we penetrate into the knowable the more profound is the surrounding darkness. What is needed today, and always, is not the man who places emphasis on the destruction of faith, but on the construction of faith. Let criticism deal severely with hypocrisy, let whited sepulchers be exposed. Yes, and let every thing that militates against verity be fought to the finish with the weapons of intellectual and scientific investigation.

But Christ tried to make the hypocrite genuine; to put faith where there was doubt, and purpose where there was despair. And so must we. The preacher is not the man to declare all possible doubts, but to show the safe way—like a pilot who may not declare every rock, but who knows the course where there are no rocks and takes his vessel over the safe course. Positive truth that can be proved, illustrated, applied, can be found. Such truth is sufficient to occupy in declaration all a man's time. There are standards and possibilities that are sure. The world needs them. They are the basis for its cheer and effort. John the apostle did not close his Revelation until after the story of woes and struggles and bloodshed he set forth victory, and the way thereto!

Let us turn to a consideration of the reasons why this message has been preached.

It is preached to urge upon you—as your lifelong treasure—the treasure of a heart of love. No human being will be able all his days to place emphasis on the affirmative unless his heart is under the dominion of love: apart from love he will be satisfied to be an onlooker and an unmoved critic. Only the Samaritan who has goodness will relieve the world's difficulties. Men without the goodness of love will see, pass by, and render no help. Love is "the affirmative of affirmatives." It is the power that dominated Christ: it is the power that provided Christ: love is Christianity. No other word may describe Christianity's spirit and Christianity's mission.

Matthew Arnold writing to Canon Farrar said: "Christianity like every other religion will have its day and cease." No! Christianity will never cease, for there is one indestructible, imperishable element in the realm of spirit, and that element is love. And so long as Christianity is love, Christianity has within it the power of an endless life!

This principle is preached to urge upon men that they ally themselves with institutions designed to be constructive of human welfare.

The stranger standing before the Cologne Cathedral was gazing at it in admiration, his eyes lifted to its noble pinnacles and still nobler towers. A man at his elbow touched him. and proudly said, "I had part in build-

ing that cathedral!" Yes, he, the stone mason, had had part in building it, and well he might rejoice in the cathedral he had helped build.

We are to connect ourselves with the political party that seems to us to have the purpose and potency to answer to the largest good: to unite with the ecclesiastical organization that will make us the noblest, and will do, in our judgment, the most for the world. Thus we increase our own influence; thus we become a strand in the great rope; thus we cheer on the workers who, in the love of God and of man, would usher in the era of well-being throughout the earth.

And again, this principle is advocated to urge upon men to make their life-choices along the line of the constructive. It is the beauty of a liberal education that it puts into its students the thought of service. Few men ever go out from a university to rent their property for immoral purposes, or to engage in commerce that is directly hurtful. They would fear (were they moved by no higher motive) to let their classmates associate them with deteriorating occupations. Not for them the saloon, the gambling hall, the place of debauchery! But there is always danger that men will not choose occupations directly beneficial; that ease, and refinement, and retirement will allure them, and that they will fail to be contributors to the world's advance.

This principle also teaches men to lay emphasis on the certainties of morality, to make them loom large before their thought; live them and live them to the full. There is only one condition coupled with the gift to us of truth, and that is that we incorporate it into our life and practise it. Doubts are sure to crowd around us. The burdens of care, the vicissitudes of business, the disappointments in our fellows, yes, and the disappointments in ourselves will daze us and leave us uncertain. And still we shall never be absolutely uncertain. There will always be the beauty of virtue, always the summons of duty, always sweet friendship, always some particular truth left to us. As we emphasize that truth, we are safe: as we dwell upon it and use it, we go from truth to truth, from strength to strength.

The only way to preserve the ideal is to convert it into character: then we hold it, and it holds us, forever more. This is the alchemy whereby "agnosticism is transmuted into knowledge, and doubt into certitude."

As old Atlas carried the world on his shoulders, so must we carry the world on our hearts. Let us be sure that we live to lift it; to make it a wiser, safer, nobler world; to be the physician who can build up health as well as diagnose disease.

The unmet needs of the world are multitudinous and they are complex. There is a place, a large place, for every sincere man in the

meeting of those needs. They ask for the master mind and the master heart. We can keep our strength only as we give it away. We are never to let good stay in our hand until it stales and corrupts. Paying out time, counsel, effort—magnanimously and cheerily—we thus put ourselves in the line of the world's noblest leaders and in the line of Christ Himself.

McCONNELL

THE STORAGE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

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THE STORAGE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

PRES. F. J. MCCONNELL, D.D.

"He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water."—PS. 1, 3.

THE Psalmist's meaning is perfectly clear. The righteous man shall, like the tree on the river bank, have a never-failing source of supply. According to the thought of the Psalmist the tree flourishes because it is near the river.

It is not with the direct meaning of the Psalmist's sentence that I wish to deal. A thought merely suggested by a Scripture passage can furnish a legitimate basis for our religious meditation if only we are careful to draw the line between what is definitely taught and what is merely suggested. The Psalmist thought of the tree as flourishing because of its nearness to the river. The modern scientist puts forward also a companion and reciprocal truth—the river flourishes because it is near the tree. The tree is supposed to act as a reservoir or sponge for the storage of rainfall. The roots underneath the surface, and the matted soil made by the fallen leaves catch the rain-drops and prevent their rushing at once into the river. The waters

are gradually discharged and the river keeps an even level. There is not flood in the springtime and drought in the summer. The tree stores up the surplus riches of the excessive rainfall for the dry days of a heated August.

So says the scientist. Whether his thought has as much importance as he thinks it has, is not for us to say. All that we urge is that this emphasis on the function of the tree as an instrument for the storage of water and of power furnishes a suggestive starting point for some reflections on the function of the righteous man as a storage-place for spiritual power. The great down-pourings of divine blessing are not to be allowed to pass away at once. The gifts of understanding and of quickened affection for God, the insights into the meaning of divine truth, the impulses to larger activity are to be caught as they fall and held for needs beyond those of the moment.

As we look at the manner of the coming of divine gifts we are struck by a certain irregularity. We cannot tell just when the understanding of our dark problems is to come, or just when we are to feel the uplift of affection for which we long. The circumstances which brought blessing yesterday may be attended with no special gift to-day. There is something of an analogy between the coming of a spiritual shower and the arrival of an actual rain-storm. Each rests so completely upon

elements as yet unknown to us that definite prediction is hardly to be relied upon. Of course the coming of each is dependent upon law, but we do not as yet know all the law. We can tell in general that certain conditions will bring the refreshing which we crave, but the laws do not help us to detailed forecasts. The precise how and when are beyond us. The weather prophet never makes more complete failure than does the prophet of spiritual things who undertakes to tell in advance just how or when a soul will be helped or a revival will be started. The showers may fall every day for weeks, and after that the heavens may or may not be shut for months.

We are in the same plight in the religious world that we feel in any realm where uncertain and unknown factors have to be taken into our reckoning. The business man studies the financial and industrial sky more persistently and carefully than the scientist looks upon the rain-clouds, but the most astute captain of industry can see but a little way. The elements of the problem are too vast and too obscure. So it is also in the sphere of intellectual achievement. Who can predict the coming of another day of vast scientific advance like the latter part of the nineteenth century? Who can tell when there will come another school of literary men like Longfellow and Emerson and their contemporaries? Who can tell us when we shall have another

class of statesmen like those of the day just preceding and during the Civil War? No, intellectual showers of refreshing cannot be foretold with satisfactory accuracy. There are too many subtle and invisible factors. There is for example, the inspiring power of that something which we call the "spirit of the age." The force of intellectual fashion, a force which is almost omnipotent in its power for good or evil, bloweth where it listeth and no man can tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Who sets the fashion that makes a certain intellectual mood as common as the air we breathe? There is, again, the coming of the genius to be taken into our thought. Who now can tell when the next genius is to come? We may try by culture and training to bridge the gulf between ordinary endowment and the endowment of genius but to no avail. We may say that the time will produce the man, that when the genius is needed he will appear, but the remark is only partially true. When has the time not called for the genius? When has he not been needed? Yet how seldom he appears.

All these considerations, and many more, are to be held in mind when we are tempted to make predictions concerning the arrival of religious blessings. To be sure we all know that with the fulfilment of certain conditions certain results will manifest themselves in the spiritual realm as well as in other realms, but

we must recognize that the conditions of many blessings are as yet beyond our knowledge. Even where we know the conditions we must often simply wait for the fulness of the time. Some uplifting revelations come out of the peculiar circumstances of a particular period; but the circumstances can never be exactly reproduced. How can we expect to have again precisely the same throbbing love for the truth which we felt in the instant of one supreme self-consecration? Moreover, some gifts of insight seem to come as the flowering out of a line of thought or deed which has been going on for months or years. The insight is the result of spiritual fruit-yielding. It may take years too grow to another insight of equal forcefulness. Then there may be at any time those sudden impressions which reveal to us so much of the glory of God, but whose comings we simply cannot anticipate. In His dealings with His disciples Jesus never encouraged them to believe that they could foretell the precise time of His coming again. We cannot feel that when He said that His coming would have the unexpectedness of the lightning's flash He meant merely a physical coming. He must have meant those spiritual comings for which the Church was to look. When He warned His disciples to be on the watch for His reappearing He also counseled them to be prepared in case He did not appear as they expected.

Since we cannot tell the time of the coming of the blessings which God sends us it would seem to be the part of ordinary prudence and sensibleness to recognize the fact, and to do all we can do to store up within ourselves the truths which have already come and which may not be followed by other revelations for many days. There is a way in which the memory, the power of meditation, and the reflective interpretation of past blessings can keep fresh those blessings. The old-time flush of ecstatic enthusiasm may pass with the moment, but the real significance of the spiritual crisis can be stored indefinitely.

We must remember further, not only that spiritual gifts do not come at regular and stated intervals, but that when they do come they are apt to come in larger abundance than can be wisely used at the time. Here again there are many illustrative analogies between the religious life and other experiences.

The farmer strips his hill-side of its trees and the washing torrents raise the river to flood-height. By allowing the waters to sweep unarrested down the hill-side the farmer has sinned against the land and against the water and against himself. In a sense he has been a water spendthrift. What was intended to be a store of wealth has rushed away in one devastating waste. The money spendthrift is slow to learn the lesson that money comes often in larger volume than is intended for

present use. The blessings have come to him to be stored, but he allows them to rush through his life with fearful destructiveness.

Thus it is also with more spiritual blessings. Almost every intellectual good gift which comes to men comes like a shower of rain, the large part of whose waters should be stored. Their usefulness is not for the present but for the future. It is well known, for example, that the first discoverers of a new physical force, or the first formulators of a new law in any department of science are not the ones who carry out the new gift to its highest usefulness. Patient men who come after, plodders who perhaps have not the brilliancy of the pioneers, work out the details by which the new force is to be harnessed to the world's machinery, or the implications by which the new doctrine is to take hold of the working truths of the world's daily life. Suppose the first formulator of the doctrine of gravitation had thought only of the intellectual ecstasy which the new thought brought to himself. That Newton was stirred to lofty intellectual exhilaration by his grasp of gravitation we know from his own words, but suppose he had thought of the newly stated principle simply as an object for his own enjoyment. How much of the force of the new principle would have been thus utilized?

It sometimes does happen that men think that truths come to them entirely for imme-

diate application to existing circumstances—that they themselves are the only ones whose welfare is to be considered. Then we have the flood-time of revolutions in which the truth itself seems to be a rioter. We have only to study a period like the French Revolution to see the force of this statement. The revolutionists were acting in the name of great truths. The truths, however, were abstract and needed careful and deliberate handling in order to be most wisely applied to the particular situations which confronted a particular nation. Some of the truths could have best been stored away for a future and wiser day. No, the revolutionists thought that the full force of the flood power should be let loose at once.

Coming now to the realm of the religious life we find men who are somewhat like material and intellectual spendthrifts. They insist that a religious blessing is for immediate use alone. This explains some of the frenzy that has now and then attended great emotional uplift in the unenlightened worshipers of all times. They have not known how to deal with a great spiritual crisis, and have ended by letting it find immediate expression largely of a physical kind. The thought that a great quickening of the heart could be made a theme for profound meditation and a fountain of practical working power has been of comparatively limited acceptance. On the

other hand this same feeling that religious gifts must be put to immediate use has been back of much wild and impractical effort in the field of Christian well-doing. The mistake of hasty reformers has been repeated in the field of religious endeavor. The idea of holding back our effort until the truth can really be mastered has seemed to many to lack confidence in God. Yet if there is any one point upon which the Son of God used and counseled caution it was as to the hasty, crude, immature utilization of spiritual truth. Both in society and in individual life He insisted that great experiences come for the sake of the future as well as of the present. As for the Master's own statements of truth, they were largely intended for that wiser day when the Holy Spirit should bring to remembrance the words which Jesus had spoken.

We pass to a still more important suggestion when we think of the need of preventing spiritual drought. If the waters cannot be stored there is thirst in mid-summer. If the spenders of money could have their way the industrial life of nations would dry up in the intervals between the financial floods. If it were not that thought can be stored in language and that wise men turn repeatedly to the great intellectual gifts which have been given in other days, the thought life of the world would soon evaporate.

It is when we are dealing with religious ex-

perience, however, that we become most aware of the effects of subtle evaporations and exhaustions which make the life die of thirst. The stream hardly starts before myriad forces attack it. If it has no stored supply on which to draw it perishes in the sands. Even if a man desire for himself increase in spiritual power, and victory against all the evils which would steal away and dissipate his life, the hot, evaporating forces of the world are forceful beyond all telling. We speak sometimes as if men fall away because of sins which they consciously and deliberately commit, but this is far from being always the fact. The deadly forces are the forces of a heated atmosphere whose power is not suspected until the stream is dry. The work of the weak, legitimate as it is, the enjoyments of social life, permissible as they are, the ambition for success, laudable as it is—all these conspire together in a throbbing city to carry away the religious effectiveness of the man whose head-streams do not take hold on eternal reservoirs. Life in its most legitimate activities will take from us the power that comes from above if that power is not renewed. It is not by deliberate evil doing that we fall away so much as by failing to store up in memory and to use in meditation the riches which God has bestowed upon us. The crying fault of the time is not only deliberate selfishness and the craving after illegitimate pleasures. It is also and much

more an intensity of life so desperate as to leave no time for meditative draughts upon the springs which God has filled for us; or rather it is a feverish restlessness and superficiality which allow crises in experience to pass without yielding for future use the secret of their inner meaning. The ordinary failure in religious experience is quite apt to come through a sort of spiritual evaporation—the stream dries up because it has no reserve supply upon which to feed.

The determination to make the most of the inspirations and insights and enthusiasms which God sends us will keep us from the extremes of wasteful intemperateness of zeal on the one hand and of parched and barren drought on the other. Most of us need to be delivered from the life of extremes. Our Christian experience swings from intolerant and over-zealous enthusiasm at one period to complete drought at another. We speak of the life as "up and down," or of great uplifts of faith yielding soon to blackest despair. We think that we please God by ranging through all the experiences from ecstasy to blind groping. There is very little real warrant for looking upon the "up and down" experience as the truly normal. Moments of high exaltation refuse to come according to schedules but when they do come the true wisdom thinks of them as gifts for the future as well as for the present, and as for the work

of the world as well as for delightful enjoyment. In other words the experiences are the showers which not only refresh the earth as they fall but also gladden the fields of midsummer as they trickle from the soil-sponges into the rivers.

Only as we thus think of our moments of sublime uplift can we make our Christianity usable. A force may be wonderful in itself and yet be of very little real value unless it can be depended upon. Only as we master the secret of making them work continuously and with some degree of uniformity can we really use steam and electricity, and stream forces. The rains will not fall according to our program, but we can so master and store up their forces as to make them work as we will. So it is with religious experience. We cannot tell beforehand the time of the coming of the insight or the enthusiasm or the new consciousness of the presence of God, but we can receive these gifts with such tenacity of grasp and such earnest search for their meaning as to make them stores of power for days of trial and temptation and exhaustion far in the future.

It need hardly be said that in this respect as in every other the example of the Master is the final illustration for our guidance. Jesus had His moments of rapt communion with God. He would spend entire nights in prayer; but the communion resulted not in

ecstasies but in long days of healing and teaching and preaching. He became so entranced with the glories of the Mount of Transfiguration that the fashion of His countenance was altered, but the inspiration of the mount was set to work in the miracle of restoration in the plain. He passed through Gethsemane into a peace which no mortal has ever known, and the peace sustained Him on Calvary. When He ascended to the skies He left with His followers more power than they can ever use at any one time. He foresaw all contingencies and His truth is a preparation for every crisis. We must remember, however, to take toward the power which He has left us the attitude of wise and reverent conservators. In a sense in addition to that of the direct meaning of the text we are to be as trees planted by the rivers of water.

McGARVEY

THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

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THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

THE REV. PRES. J. W. MCGARVEY

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."—Hebrews 5 : 7, 8.

WHY did Jesus pray? Scoffers have said that if He was divine He prayed to himself, and His prayers were not real. They forget that while He was here He was less than Himself—that tho, before His advent He was "in the form of God, and counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God," He "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2 : 6-8). This is the representation from which to regard Him. Having thus made Himself in a measure dependent on His Father, it was proper for Him to pray.

Others have said that He prayed, not because He needed, as we do, the benefits of prayer, but simply to set us an example. This answer is little better than the other; for if He prayed only to set an example, it was a bad

example, for it would teach us also to offer prayers for which we would feel no need. That His prayers were real and heartfelt, is manifest from the passage cited as my text in which it is said that " in the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." When prayers are accompanied by " strong crying and tears " on the part of a sane man, there can be no possible doubt of their sincerity and reality.

The question still confronts us, Why did Jesus pray? We are told that He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4 : 15). If this is true, He must have employed with unfailing success the means of resisting temptation which we employ so ineffectually. One of these is prayer; for He said to His disciples, " Watch, and pray that ye enter not into temptation." To " enter into temptation," is to come under its controlling power. To watch and to pray guards us against this. We watch, in order to see the temptation ere it assails us. We pray for strength to resist it when it comes. If we study the prayers of Jesus with reference to the occasions on which they were offered, I think we shall see very plainly that He faithfully practised the precept which He gave to His disciples.

He began His public career by solemnly submitting to John's baptism. Whatever may have been His trials and temptations before

this, He knew that this act would introduce Him into a career in which they would be more severe and would end in a struggle testing the utmost strength of His soul. He perhaps knew also that immediately after His baptism He would be subjected to the strongest temptations which Satan's ingenuity could invent for that moment in His career. Most wisely then was His baptism followed immediately by prayer. And it was while He was praying that the heavens were opened above Him, and the Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove, and entered into Him (Luke 3 : 21, 22; Mark 1 : 10, 11). He was now prepared for the worst that Satan could do, and when, after forty days He triumphed and drove Satan from Him, angels came and ministered to Him.

We know not to what extent Jesus was dependent on His Father for wisdom and guidance respecting the affairs of His coming kingdom; but we know that He made His most important administrative act the subject of protracted prayer. That act was the selection of the twelve men to whom He would entrust the establishment and ordering of His kingdom on earth after He should have returned to the world whence He came. No selection of subordinate officers in any kingdom since the world began has been of so momentous importance. Suppose, if we can, that all had proven as false to their trust as did Judas

Iscariot, who can begin to imagine the consequences? We may not be able to see any temptation that beset Him in making this choice, unless it was in regard to placing among the twelve the thief who was to betray Him; but we learn that before making the selection He spent the whole of the preceding night in prayer (Luke 6 : 12-16). Who can tell to what extent the unequaled fidelity and amazing triumph of those men in the inauguration and administration of the kingdom of God resulted from the efficacy of that prayer? The answer is wrapt up in the secrets of eternity.

On the morning of the day in which the five thousand were fed the twelve apostles returned to Jesus from their first tour of preaching and healing (Luke 9 : 1-17). They had not yet eaten their morning meal. An agitated throng gathered about them and prest them so that they could not do so. As Mark expresses it, " Many were coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat " (6 : 30, 31). At the same early hour an excited group of John's disciples came to Jesus with the crushing announcement that John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod, and that they had taken his headless body and laid it in a tomb (Matt. 14 : 12-14; Mark 6 : 29). Either of these reports was enough to excite the people; and when they heard both, they were wild. The people were al-

ready thrilled by what the twelve had been doing, and when they heard of the bloody deed of Herod they went wild; for all counted John as a prophet. The more they heard the details of the bloody deed the more exasperated they became.

But if this fateful announcement was exasperating to the multitude of the Galileans, what must it have been to Jesus? John had been the best friend He had on earth next to his mother. He had baptized Him, had given Him honor in the presence of the multitude, and had secured for Him His first disciples. He was also a kinsman in the flesh, and even his murderer had acknowledged him to be "a holy man and just." No one who has not been suddenly informed of the cruel murder of a dear friend and kinsman, can realize the conflict of emotions which agitated the soul of Jesus when this announcement was made. The pang was all the keener in that it foreshadowed what was soon to come upon Himself. He said nothing. Not a word of comment is quoted from Him by any of the narrators. What He was tempted to say we can conjecture only by our knowledge of human nature, and the apostle's statement that He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." He only said to His apostles, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (Matt. 14:34). What other purpose He had in going to the

desert place we learn farther on. They quietly entered their boat and struck out for the pasture lands belonging to Bethsaida Julias, at the northeastern curve of the lake (Luke 9 : 10). The people soon saw to what point the boat was headed, and with a common impulse they started on a rush around the northwestern curve and northern end of the lake for the same spot. The news spread like wild-fire through the villages, and almost the whole population ran out to join the race. Soon the largest multitude that ever gathered about Jesus was before Him, and the rest for which He had started was prevented. His compassion for them and for the sick whom they brought with them overpowered His desire for rest and quiet, so He spent the day in teaching and healing until it was too late for the people to return to their homes without suffering from hunger. Then came the feeding. So wildly excited had the people been, that they had come to this uninhabited plain without food; and, reckless of consequences, had remained all day.

At this point an incident mentioned only by John added immensely to the temptation which had been oppressing Jesus since the early morning. He perceived that the people "were about to come and take him by force and make him king" (6 : 15). This was a renewal of Satan's third temptation in the wilderness. The people believed that He in-

tended to set up a political kingdom; and such was the exasperation now felt toward Herod that the moment for an uprising seemed to have come. The five thousand men present were ready to strike the first blow. Herod's capital city, Tiberias, was in full view across the lake, and it could be taken in a few hours. With five thousand men ready to move at His command and the whole of Galilee in a popular ferment, it would have been easy and quick work to dethrone the murderer of His friend, and then march with accumulating forces upon Pontius Pilate and Judea. If His soul had been fired with such passions as are universal with men, how strong the temptation would have been! But no; the disciples are hastily ordered into their boat with orders to cross the lake, the multitude are formally dismissed, and Jesus retires into the mountain at the base of which He had spent the day. Not till now did He find that for which He had started in the morning. Alone in the solitude of the mountain He spends the night in prayer. Once more He applies the safeguard against temptation; once more the tempest within His soul, like that on the lake a few days previous, hears the rebuke, "Peace, be still"; and there is a "great calm." It was now about the fourth watch of the night; the full moon of the passover week was shining (John 6:4); and a very strong wind was blowing from the west; but Jesus, knowing

that His disciples were struggling in the middle of the lake against that wind, walks out to them on the boiling waves, a distance of nearly three miles (John 6 : 1). The boat soon glided over the remaining three miles, but when it landed another day had dawned, and the whole company had passed twenty-four hours without rest, without food, unless they partook with the multitude of the cold barley bread and fish, and without sleep. This is a specimen of the laborious life which Jesus was leading, and into the hardships of which His disciples were initiating the twelve.

Not long after this occurred that ever memorable occasion on which Jesus was first formally acknowledged by His disciples as the " Christ, the Son of the living God." He was " praying alone " when the disciples came to Him and heard from Him the searching question, " Who do you say that I am? " (Luke 9 : 18-20). What the especial occasion of that prayer was, we are not informed; but it illustrates at least His prayerful habit.

About eight days after these sayings Jesus went up into another mountain to pray, and now He takes with Him Peter, James and John (Luke 9 : 28). Matthew calls it " a high mountain " (17 : 1), and as one of the sayings from which the eight days are counted was spoken near Caesarea Philippi, which stands at the base of Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in Palestine, it was proba-

bly this or some of its outlying spurs that He now ascended. It was a laborious climb to reach the spot, and here was another night of prayer. The three disciples soon completed their short prayers, and fell asleep. They were awakened by the sound of voices; and on looking up they beheld Jesus transfigured in glory and two other men in glory deeply absorbed in conversation with Him. They soon learn by hearing their names called, that the other two were Moses and Elijah. They learn, too, that the subject of conversation was "the decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." They had first heard of this about eight days before from the lips of Jesus Himself (Luke 9 : 22, 28). Now, to their amazement they hear it spoken of again by these mighty men whose abode had been for many centuries in the land of departed spirits. What they said of it we may never know; but may we not safely conclude that the purpose of Jesus in that night of prayer was to plead for an increase of fortitude as the shadow of His final agony was now growing deeper as He approached it? His prayer was answered by the words of sympathy which came to Him from men almost divine. How I would love to know what they said. If my courage shall fail not when I meet with Moses or Elijah, I shall inquire what they said to Jesus; and I shall also ask how they knew that He would be on that

mountain that night, and how they knew that He was going to die in Jerusalem.

Although Jesus was so prayerful Himself, He was not persistent like the apostle Paul in urging this duty on the disciples. Even in His well-known remarks on the subject in the Sermon on the Mount, He did not exhort them to pray; but, assuming that they would pray, He was content with telling them how. And so, in the subsequent course of His ministry He depended on the force of His example, rather than on repeated precept for their training in this respect. His method had the desired effect; for after what I have thus far narrated, "it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place that when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples'" (Luke 11:1-4). Having been a disciple of John, this man knew what John had taught on the subject, and he also knew what Jesus Himself had taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Why then was he not satisfied? Evidently he thought from the protracted prayers of Jesus, and perhaps from what he saw, or thought he saw, of their effects on the life of Jesus, that there was yet a secret in prayer which he had not discovered. None of the disciples could as yet pray all night; and none since then have learned to do so. Who ever tried it without falling asleep? And who has prayed so effectually as to guard himself

against all sin? It is a high credit to this disciple—and probably he spoke for the others as well as for himself—that he aspired to his Master's devotion in this respect. He was disappointed. Jesus answered only by repeating the major part of the simple prayer which He had taught them before, and by adding a parable to show the value of importunity in pleading for what we need (Luke 11 : 5-13).

While seated at the last supper, Peter met with a surprise greater, perhaps, than any he had ever known. Jesus said to him: " Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you like wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou art turned again, establish thy brethren " (Luke 22 : 32). What a revelation to Simon! How startling to know that Satan had thus reached for him, that he might toss him up and down like a farmer winnowing his wheat! What could be meant by his future turning again that he might strengthen his brethren; and how watchful the Master had been to intercede for his safety when he was unmindful of danger. Who knows to what extent the final salvation of Peter depended on that supplication? How sweet it is to know that we too may be objects of similar solicitude in our days of peril. While praying for Himself, Jesus did not forget to pray for others. Did He pray for Judas? He gave the traitor blood-curd-

ling warnings on that same fateful night, but not a word about praying for him. Was it true of Him, as the old preachers were once accustomed to say, that He was no longer on "praying ground or pleading terms with God?"

The longest prayer ever quoted from the lips of Jesus followed after Judas had left the upper room and the solemn feast. It contains few words for Himself, and the rest for the faithful to whom the destinies of His kingdom were now to be entrusted till the final day without His visible presence. Then followed the silent moonlit walk through the deserted streets and down the steep declivity to the Kidron and Gethsemane. On reaching the garden it was observed that "He began to be sorrowful and sore troubled." The composure that He had maintained thus far broke down as He directed Peter and the sons of Zebedee to go farther with Him, and said to the rest, "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray." His supreme hour had come, and what could He do but pray? To the three He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"—death, unless He could find relief. "Abide ye here and watch" (stay awake) "with me." Three times He went from them a short distance to pray, and three times came back to find them asleep. He could not endure to be thus left alone in His anguish. But wakeful angels were watching

over the scene and at the moment of His keenest anguish one of them was permitted to appear to Him and strengthen Him. The reported words of this prayer are few. It was doubtless now that His words were attended with strong crying and tears, and by these He was choked almost into silence. I can almost hear the sob with which he prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Who can fathom the depth of meaning in that utterance, or weigh the temptation which it implied? It was offered to "him who was able to save him from death," and He was heard (Heb. 5:8)—heard not by saving Him from death, but by sending the angel to strengthen Him. How I long to know what that angel said! Some day I hope to ask him. It did strengthen Him; for when He next returned to the sleeping disciples, instead of waking them, as before, He said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." Without another cry, or another groan, He passed through the arrest, the trial, the mocking, the scourging, the crucifixion, till the moment when He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In another moment we hear the last prayer He ever uttered: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." His Father had not forsaken Him. His temptations, His prayers and His tears were now ended forevermore.

McGIFFERT

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE MODERN WORLD

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE MODERN WORLD

PROF. A. C. MCGIFFERT, D.D.

"Go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." —Luke 9 : 60.

THE age in which we live is notably religious. I will not say that there is more religion within the Christian Church than in other days, or that we Christians are distinguished above our fathers by the sincerity and vigor of our religious life, but certainly the multiform religious sects that are springing up all about us, the growing discontent with existing forms of faith, and the eagerness of many both within and without the established religious communities to listen to those who have anything new to offer in religious lines are evidence of a deep and wide stirring of religious impulse and interest. Humanity at large is so constituted that religion of some sort may fairly be regarded as permanently necessary to it, but as the needs of men change the religions in which they have been trained may easily cease to meet their new demands, and a new faith may come to be substituted for the old. This has occurred repeatedly in history. The displacement of the Greek and Roman paganism

by Christianity is one of the most notable and familiar instances. Christianity won its victory in the Roman Empire and became finally the religion of the state simply because it met the needs of the age as the older cults were unable to do. The faiths of Greece and Rome were the fruit of ancient conditions and even before Christianity appeared new needs had developed which made new religious conceptions and practises a necessity. The result was that foreign cults of all sorts became popular and the old ones underwent large changes in the effort, conscious or unconscious, to meet the new situation. Had Christianity not come upon the scene the traditional paganism, radically modified to meet the demands of the day, might have retained a permanent hold upon the Roman Empire. But the new faith, born in the new age, and responsive from the beginning to its new needs, was fitted as the older could not be to become the religion of the new world and its victory was inevitable.

It has often been remarked that our age bears a striking resemblance to the period in which Christianity first saw the light. The eager curiosity, the social unrest, the lively intercourse between different parts of the world, the developing spirit of cosmopolitanism and sense of human brotherhood, the disappearance of old and familiar landmarks, the common questioning of traditional standards, the multiplying of religious sects, the

prevalence both of rationalism and of superstition, the loss of faith and the search for certainty—in all these and many other respects there is a close kinship between the earliest and the latest of the Christian centuries. It was a period of change on a vast scale and so is this. Are we to suppose then that as the ancient paganism gave way before the young and lusty Christianity so Christianity in its turn is to be crowded off the field by some new faith or by no faith? There are many who think so and who talk about Christianity as an outworn system fitted only for an age that is gone. In reply to them it is not enough to show that Christianity still meets many needs of many hearts, needs which remain ever much the same—that it comforts the sorrowing, strengthens the weak, raises the fallen as it has always done. It must be shown rather that Christianity not only does this but also meets the new needs of the new age. What then is this new age? What are its characteristic features and its peculiar needs?

The modern age is marked by a vast confidence in the powers of man. For many centuries it was the custom to think of man as a weak and puny thing. Humility and self-distrust were the cardinal virtues, pride and self-reliance and independence the root of all vice. The change is not the fruit of speculation, a mere philosophical theory as to man's

relation to the universe, but the result of the actual and growing conquest of the world in which we live. We are not completely its masters to be sure, but we understand it far better and control it far more effectively than our fathers did. The past century has given the most brilliant demonstration the world has ever seen of what human power can actually accomplish in the material realm, the realm of the tangible and the visible and the audible. Science and mechanics have combined to give the modern man a sense of mastery undreamed of in other ages. What such a man most needs from Christianity (and he is the representative man of the modern age, whose presence in overwhelming numbers chiefly distinguishes this age from those that have preceded it) is not condemnation for the pride of accomplishment, exhortations to humility, and the offer of healing from above, but the chance to use his strength in ways that are most worth while—higher ideals, larger opportunities, vaster realms of service.

Another marked characteristic of the modern age is its widespread and controlling interest in the present world. With all its sorrow and suffering and distress, the world seems to the representative modern man a better and a more satisfying place than it did to the representative man of an older day. It is not simply that this earth has become more interesting as we have learned more

about it, and the present life more comfortable as material conditions have improved, but that the future possibilities of human life upon this planet seem so tremendous. Characteristic of a former time was its conviction that all had been learned and accomplished that man was capable of, that the golden age lay in the past and that nothing better was to be looked for. Characteristic of the present time is its unbounded faith in the future, based upon its solid experience of the past. Pessimism there is in plenty, as in every age of the world, but optimism not pessimism is the dominant temper of this young and confident century. And again, what the age needs from Christianity is not a demonstration that this earth is a poor and unsatisfying place, but the vision of a work worth doing now and here, a work worth doing for this world, in which the thought and interest of the modern age so largely center.

Another characteristic of our age is its growing social concern, which is the fruit in part of the modern interest in the present life just referred to, in part of the general emphasis on solidarity and unity which succeeded the eighteenth century emphasis on individuality. The social conscience of Europe and America is now more wide awake and more generally active than ever before. Opportunities for social service are steadily multiplying, character is more and more inter-

preted in social terms, and their obligation to labor for the promotion of the welfare of society is increasingly felt both by individuals and by institutions. Our generation is burning with zeal for social, economic and civic reform, and is controlled by the idea of human brotherhood and marked by its practise as no generation ever was before. And again, what such an age needs from Christianity is not to be told the supreme importance of personal salvation, but to be given a social ideal grand enough to fire its imagination, to arouse its enthusiasm and to enlist its devotion.

Has Christianity then a message for the modern world, or does it belong wholly to the past and minister only to the same needs it always has? If so, it may expect to find itself more and more disregarded by modern men. All too many indeed disregard it now. It is not that they are hostile to Christianity but that they care nothing about it. It seems to address itself only to interests which they do not share. The old needs as experience shows, may be revivified, or even recreated on a larger or a smaller scale where they do not already exist, but to create artificial needs in order to meet them when the modern world is full of real needs of another kind is a sorry business. If Christianity cannot do more than this it is an outworn faith and the past only not the future belongs to it. But Christianity is not an outworn faith and the future

does belong to it, for it has a message for the representative men of this modern age. It ministers not only to permanent human needs which are common to all times and places, but also to the new and peculiar needs of this twentieth century.

The greatest fact in modern Christian history is the rediscovery of Jesus. He is better known and understood to-day than He has ever been before. The recent development of historical study and criticism which has revolutionized traditional opinion upon all sorts of matters has given us a new insight into the origin and growth of Christianity. The Jesus of the synoptic gospels has been finally set free from the integuments in which the devotion and the misunderstanding of the Christian Church early enswathed Him, and has been allowed for the first time to speak for Himself. And the striking feature of the situation is that He speaks a language which the modern age, with its genial confidence in men, its vivid interest in the present world and its profound concern for social betterment, is peculiarly fitted to understand. His message is just the message that the modern world is looking for.

The kingdom of God was the burden of His preaching, not a kingdom lying simply in another world beyond the skies, but established here and now—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth"; not a kingdom

made up of isolated human lives moving along their several and separate paths toward heaven, but of the society of all human kind banded together in common labor under the control of a common purpose; and not by some supernatural and miraculous means was the kingdom to come, while men sat by and gazed in awe upon the power of the Almighty, but by the work of Jesus Himself and of those that came after Him, by the devotion and energy of human lives working at one with the divine will. When Jesus said, "Follow me," He meant nothing else than laboring with Him at the same task in the same spirit.

The kingdom of God on earth—what does it mean? We answer perhaps glibly enough: the control of the lives of all men and of all their relationships one with another and of all the institutions in which those relationships find expression by the spirit of Jesus Christ who has shown us what God is and what He would have this world be. The answer is profoundly true, but it needs to be given a more definite content. What is actually involved in the kingdom of God on earth? Is it only a vague form of words, a beautiful but intangible mirage; or is it really something concrete and practical? Does it affect only ethics and religion, or social, economic and civic matters as well? Does it mean merely the improvement of individual character or also the transformation of society and the State; the mod-

ification of details in our existing systems or their radical reconstruction; the grafting of new principles on the old or the repudiation of all we have and the birth of a new world? Can our present civilization really be Christianized or must it give way to an altogether different order? Is it a dangerous thing, this kingdom of God? Does it cut too deep to be welcome or is it simply the fulfilment of our faith and hope? And how is the kingdom to be established? What methods are to be adopted, what principles followed and along what lines must the work proceed? It is not to answer them that I have propounded such momentous questions as these. Who indeed can answer them to-day? It is only to emphasize the importance of the problem. All other problems pale beside it. In it the Church of the twentieth century, to which has been committed the responsibility of leadership has the most difficult, the most complicated, the most pressing problem that it has to face. We Protestants have hardly more than played with it hitherto. In the Middle Ages the Catholics grappled with it and actually evolved an international state which they called the kingdom of God and which dominated western Europe for centuries. It was a grand conception, magnificently carried out, but it was not the kind of kingdom Jesus was thinking of nor the kind of a kingdom the world needs to-day. We live in the modern

age and the modern age has turned its back forever on medievalism whether in State or Church. We do not want the spirit of other-worldliness to distract men from their duty to this world, but to inspire them to it. We do not want the future to overshadow the present, but to transfigure it. We do not want the supernatural to crowd out the natural, but to fill it with divine meaning. We do not want a recrudescence of priestly or ecclesiastical authority, but the birth of the spirit of Christian service. Freedom, spontaneity, individuality, opportunity, confidence and self-reliance, all these precious gains of the modern age we must preserve. But we must have also love, sympathy, fellowship, cooperation and an ideal worthy of our common devotion, our common effort and our common sacrifice.

The kingdom for which medieval Christians toiled was for still another reason quite a different thing from the kingdom of God which Jesus had in mind. He did not mean another institution, set up in the midst of the existing institutions of the world into which a man could enter from without. The kingdom of God which Jesus revealed is not identical with the Christian Church. It is the reign of God, of His purposes, of His ideals, of His Spirit, in the lives of men and in the relationships and institutions of the world. It is the world itself brought into harmony with God's will; not a dualism of two kingdoms, but one

kingdom only—God's world and ours—controlled by the spirit of Christ. For this the Christian Church is called to labor; not to enlarge and glorify itself and to seek to dominate, but to make itself the most efficient instrument for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God.

It is a vast and splendid thing, this kingdom of God of which Jesus dreamed. It is not for one type of mind, one form of character, one sort of temperament alone, but for all the sons of God the wide world over. It is rich enough to supply the most varied needs. It offers opportunity to the strong, activity to the strenuous, visions to the seer, comfort to the sorrowing, peace to the troubled, to all service by doing or enduring, by giving or receiving, by the spirit of Christ in active conflict or in quiet meditation.

It is a divine thing, this kingdom of God. In it God's supreme purpose finds expression, His purpose to promote the reign of the spirit of love among men. It is for this that God is, and this is what God's love for the world means. In human brotherhood the divine Fatherhood finds fulfilment. Through human brotherhood alone the Father's purpose for His children comes to accomplishment, and through human brotherhood alone His children discover Him. God Himself is back of the kingdom. We did not invent it. Its ideals are not of our making. They have been

given us. They are higher than we could have dreamed of. They lift us above ourselves. We rise to meet them and find exprest in them the best that we can know. In this kingdom the divine and the human are inextricably interwoven. In it there is communion with God as His desires fill our souls and His purposes are made our own, and in it there is the power of God as the inspirations of His presence lay hold upon us. And yet it realizes itself only in the experience of man. We do not find it by turning our backs upon the world and ceasing to be human, we find it only here in human life itself. It is rooted in the inner man, in his affections, his will, his character, but it comes to visible expression in all sorts of ways as the external relationships of life are brought one after another under the control of the inner disposition.

It is both material and spiritual, this kingdom of God. It ministers to the body and to the soul. Not as in earlier days when the Church thought only of the spirit and looked upon the body with contempt; not as to-day so many social reformers, even Christians, seem to think only of the body and disregard altogether the higher things of the spirit. Unlike both, Jesus ministered at once to the outer and the inner man, and the kingdom of God which He proclaimed means the weal of the one as of the other, means a social order in which there shall be food and drink and cloth-

ing and shelter, a just share of the physical goods of life for all God's children, and in which there shall be also for all of them the consolations of divine communion, the inspirations of human fellowship, the glow of sympathy, the joy of service, the trinity of faith and hope and love.

It is a Christian thing, this kingdom of God. The greatest gift of God to the world is Jesus Christ. It is just this which differentiates the kingdom we proclaim from all man-made Utopias. His life, His character, His teaching, His work, His spirit of service dominating the world—this is what the kingdom means. In it is not merely our self-taught love and devotion, but the love and devotion of the Christ, kindled in our hearts as we have looked upon Him and caught the inspiration of His vision of God. The prophets too preached the kingdom of God, and exalted their conception was; but they had not seen the Christ, and it is not the kingdom of the prophets we proclaim to the world but the kingdom of the Christ. In Him God has given the full revelation of His purpose for the world, and His aims, His motives, His estimate of values, His hopes are those that we would have the world share.

It is a uniting, not a dividing force, this kingdom of God. Not setting the present over against the past, the Church over against the world, the conservative over against the radi-

cal, one community, one nation, one sect over against another. It gathers them all up into one; for it is broad enough to include all the best of the past and of the present and of the future yet to come; grand enough to enlist the devotion of men of every people, clime and faith; and large enough to unite the whole world in a vast confederation of labor, not for the greatest good of the greatest number but for the greatest good of all; not the good of competition, which blesses one at the expense of another, but the good of cooperation which blesses both alike. Not by jealousy and envy, not by sectarian zeal and religious fanaticism, not by national bigotry and class prejudice, not by the forcing of opinions and customs upon others, but by the union of all men of good will of every race and condition, by the sharing of their visions and by the linking of their faiths and hopes and efforts shall the kingdom of God come.

The great task of the Christian Church of the twentieth century is ready to its hand. Upon the Church devolves the chief responsibility for the bringing of the kingdom, for to it has been vouchsafed the supreme vision, in Jesus' revelation of His Father's will. The Church has had many large tasks in the past which it has met in a spirit of consecrated heroism—the conversion of the Roman Empire, the planting of a Christian civilization among the barbarian people of western Eu-

rope, the establishment of the world Church of the Middle Ages, the recovery of the gospel of Christ and its incarnation in new institutions in the sixteenth century. It is in the face of great tasks that the Church has always shown itself at its best and it may well be grateful when they come. If ever there was such a task it is before us now.

We are on the eve of great happenings. No one familiar with history and able to read the signs of the times can for a moment doubt it. Unfortunately the Church, as too often in the past, has temporarily lost its leadership. It continues to minister beautifully and efficiently to its own members and to bless the lives of multitudes of them, but it is not in the van of progress and much of the best life of the world has turned its back upon it and is pushing on alone. There have been periods when the world lagged behind the Church and the Church's one task was to urge it forward. To-day no small part of the world is ahead of the Church.

We Christians are apt to be much too easily satisfied. We are complacent if our churches hold their own, if our better families can still be counted on, if respectability still dictates, even tho hardly so imperatively as in other days, connection with the church and attendance upon its services. But this is not to be in command of the situation and it gives no large promise for the future. We are content

with too little and the great modern world with its teeming masses, its eager enthusiasms, its burning problems and its untold possibilities, is in danger of slipping away from us. And yet what a message we have for it! The kingdom of God on earth, the control of all the relationships of life and of all the institutions of society by the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Is it a mere idle dream, the coming of God's kingdom on this our earth? It is the dream of Jesus Himself, and shall not His disciples share His faith? Is it vain after all the efforts of these nineteen centuries to hope that the thing can ever be done? But the thing has never been tried with that singleness of purpose to which Jesus summoned His followers. That is a momentous fact to be taken account of in every estimate of the future. The Christian Church has tried to do all sorts of things and in many of them has been remarkably successful. But it has never made the kingdom of God on earth, the reign of the spirit of Christ in all the relationships of life and in all the institutions of society its supreme aim. And so we need not be discouraged because the work is still unaccomplished. It is a new task to which the new insight of the Church summons it. Made wise by all the experiences of the past, endowed with a new charity and breadth of vision, taught the evils of disunion and the necessity of cooperation with all the forces of goodness everywhere, the

Church is justified in entering upon its new mission with courage and with confidence.

Let us no longer stand upon the defensive; let us no longer regret a past forever gone; let us no longer be content to minister to the needs only of a small and select portion of the community; let us no longer indeed think so much about needs and think more about opportunities and obligations; let us keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus' glorious vision of the kingdom of God, of a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness, of a regenerated society controlled by His spirit. So will Christianity again as in the days of its youth rise exultant to a world-wide task. And this strong, manly, eager, busy age will respond with enthusiasm to an ideal worthy of its wisest planning and its best effort, the transformation not merely of individual lives into the image of Jesus Christ, but of this great earth into the kingdom of God, His Father and ours.

McNEILE

THE POWER PROOFS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

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THE POWER PROOFS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

A. H. McNeile, D.D.

"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection."—Phil. 3 : 10.

It is a striking fact that we do not find in the New Testament any argument, any attempt at logical proof with reference to the resurrection of Jesus. Paul in his earliest epistle takes it already for granted as a simple fact which the Thessalonians already knew from his previous preaching. That is to say it is assumed as a piece of history well known as far away as Macedonia, less than twenty-five years after Jesus was crucified in Palestine. And on that basis Paul argues for the resurrection of all who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Similarly in writing to the Corinthians, he draws the deduction that "if Christ be not raised, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins." And the well-known fact that Christ had been raised, which he had taught them before when he was at Corinth, involved of a necessity the raising of all men in Him. And we find that in every epistle in the New Testament, except the three short private letters, the Epistle to Philemon, and the Second and Third Epistle

of John, Christ's resurrection is either explicitly assumed as a fact, or is implied in statements about His second coming from heaven.

When we pass to the early speeches in the Acts, we find the resurrection again assumed, but another deduction is drawn from it. It is considered as an accepted fact which proves that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And Paul teaches the same in Romans; Christ was designated, marked out, proved, to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. Thus in different parts of the New Testament we see the writers taking the two complementary positions: Because Christ was the Son of God we can assume that He rose; and because Christ rose we are corroborated in our belief that He was the Son of God. But the only sort of proof of the resurrection itself which the New Testament offers us lies in the appearances of Jesus to individuals on Easter and the following days. Those who believe that mankind has been gradually led on by God through a long process of mental development, will be ready to admit that a turning point in that process was reached when the human mind conceived the idea of a real existence after death. The primitive notions of life in the underworld sufficed the Hebrews for long ages. They assumed that the dead were a shadowy, nerveless imitation of the living; without feeling or desire, language or action, not asleep yet not awake.

"The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten; their love and their hatred and their envy are now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." "The dead cannot praise God, neither they that go down into Sheol." "Thou hast laid them in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness and in the deep"; without light or warmth or movement or activity, and yet denied the bliss of annihilation. The Hebrew Sheol is a nightmare to make one shudder. But as time went on, Hebrew thinkers themselves revolted from the awful picture. The thing was monstrous and impossible, because a dawning conception began to illumine their minds that God was a God of love and justice, and yet this world failed to exhibit that justice or that love. The wicked flourished like a green bay tree, while the good more often suffered than not. Facts cried out and would not be silenced. There must be retribution somehow, somewhere; there must be a future righting of frightful wrongs; there must be punishment for sins and rewards for righteousness, else God would not be God. And thus the aspiration slowly grew—the expectation of a resurrection slowly deepened, until very late in the Old Testament it found its classical expression in the last chapter of the book of Daniel. And it is an aspiration which all endorse, a hope

that finds an echo in every human heart. But it is difficult to think that a hope which finds an echo in every human heart is not destined to be realized. The universality of the wish shows that it is an integral factor in human thought, and is itself an argument and a pledge that He who made human nature intended to satisfy its supremest longing—not of course necessarily in the form in which men's imagination portrayed it. The Jews painted a variety of highly-colored pictures of the future life, which are preserved in many of the writings in the two centuries before Christ. But the longing was there; and it predisposes us to expect that in some form or other it would be fulfilled. And then we reach the records of its fulfilment in the New Testament.

Now the modern spirit of criticism, the tendency to sift the evidence for every fact in history, has naturally not left the greatest of all marvels untouched. There is no use in denying that it is difficult to harmonize all the details in the narratives of Christ's appearances. The possibility must be frankly admitted that some of them may be unhistorical. In dealing with criticisms on the subject, one large class of them may be left entirely out of account. I mean those which consist in the argument that all miracles are impossible, therefore the resurrection is impossible, therefore the appearances after the resurrection

are unhistorical. But dismissing such reasonings as that, which start by begging the whole question, it is not inconceivable that at some future time it might be really proved that no human eyes saw the risen Lord. Manuscripts might be found, really contemporary with the apostles, which might show that all the present narratives of the resurrection were a later growth. But suppose, for the sake of argument, that it were so. We should no doubt be deprived of an enormous help to our faith, but the fact of the resurrection itself would not be disproved. The resurrection marked Christ as the Son of God, but it did not make Him such. We can confidently take the converse position, which we saw was taken in the New Testament and say, Since Christ was the Son of God, and we have an overwhelming mass of evidence which satisfies us of that, He must have risen, and returned to the Father wearing His humanity; and this must be true whether men and women saw Him with human eyes or not. On the day of the crucifixion the divine Man lost His self that He might gain it. But if He lost it, and after all gained nothing, if He died as the representative of all and then remained dead, His work is not worthy to be praised or had in honor.

It is sometimes said that Christianity stands or falls with the resurrection. And some Christians are in constant fear for their faith

because they go on to say that Christianity stands or falls with the narratives of Christ's appearances in the New Testament. And they would rather shut their eyes and not read modern criticisms than run the faintest risk of their faith being shaken. But it is far more true to say that Christianity stands or falls with the divinity of the Lord, of which the resurrection—quite independently of the narratives—was a necessary and inevitable consequence. It is here that we approach the central mystery of mysteries. We are compelled to employ words: but all words are only symbols or tools, clumsy inadequate symbols, rough blunt tools, to express our profoundest convictions and intuitions. The words "He that loseth his self shall find it" contain a principle which prevails throughout the length and breadth of the universe. But the more we think about the words, the more we feel that they are in some sense true also of God. No man hath seen God. We can only judge of what He may be from what man is. And it is the supreme glory of man that such a deduction is possible; we feel unshakeably convinced that we are made in His image and after His likeness. Judging, then, from ourselves, it seems to us that perfection of being must include love; and love must involve one who loves, and one who is loved—a subject and an object. Now if we could conceive of God's absolute being, we should have

to conceive of a subject without an object. But it is inconceivable that God is not love. A subject without an object is unthinkable. And so we conclude that for the sake of His own perfection of being, He limits Himself, He sets before Him an object that He may love. It is true that nothing can be imagined that is not included in His absolute self. A real, actual, eternal dualism cannot be. The whole created universe must lie within the boundless embrace of His infinity. And from all eternity the object of God's love existed in the person of Him whom we call the Son of God. But, within the limits of time, by the performance of the act that we call creation, He caused the existence of a finite object—something which, in our poverty of language, we must describe as set over against Him, opposite to Him, different from Him; dependent of course for its being always and absolutely upon His being, filled with His immanence, kept in existence by His continuous fiat, a real revelation of His activity; but yet an object of His personal love.

But more than that, the love which a man can have towards an impersonal object, a thing, is not the highest love. The material world obeys His laws without variableness or shadow of turning. But its obedience is automatic; it cannot help being very good; it cannot give back love for love. When God set the universe over against Himself as the ob-

ject of His thought, He caused it to be of such a nature that it should pass through development and evolution, until personal beings emerged into existence who could return to Him personal love, and return it of their own free will—of their own deliberate choice; otherwise they were machines, automatons, mere things; and the love between Him and them would not be mutual, and therefore it would not be perfect. And not until that personal love of man to Him is perfect, can God Himself be said to be complete. He wills to be in some sense incomplete, and to grow towards completeness by the growing perfection of man's love to Him. In other words, He limits, He sacrifices His self, that He may find it. I cannot think that any line of thought will touch even the fringe of the problems of the universe unless it starts from this mystery of God's self limitation; self sacrifice; the losing of the absoluteness of His self, in order to gain His self in the highest perfection. And we cannot help supposing that even if there had been no sin, God's self would have assumed humanity, in order to bring about the unity between Him and His creation. It was man's sin which caused the life of the God-man upon earth to be what it was; and it was man's sin which made Him die. And when He died, His death was a repetition, a reflection, an imitation, but at the same time a necessary completion of the eternal self limita-

tion, self sacrifice of the Godhead. But if that sacrifice of the divine self was performed in order to bring about the unity, the atonement of all men with Him in mutual love, the whole eternal purpose of the Father would have come to nought if the dead Christ had not become the living Christ, if the final union of the divine self with Himself had failed. Everything that we can imagine about the being of God is based on the analogy of the being of men; and that analogy, if valid, leads us to the incarnation. But once led to the incarnation, we find it impossible to stop. The incarnation was a means to an end; and if the end was not accomplished, and the atonement was not completed by the resurrection, religious philosophy becomes a meaningless enigma, because the key to human history is lost. And if so, we are surely right in thinking that the question whether human eyes saw Him or not after He rose, is of relatively minor importance; undoubtedly an immense help to faith, but not essential to the atonement of God and man.

And yet we must not belittle this help to faith. If Christ must have risen, whether men saw Him or not, it makes it easier to believe that they did see Him. And further, if the history of the world is unintelligible without the resurrection, it is no argument against it to say that it is unique in the annals of mankind. From the nature of the case it must be

unique, because there can be only one infinite, living representative of the universe.

And so, with a sure confidence in the divine act which completed the atonement, we can turn to ourselves. The world wanted a proof in the days of the apostles, and the only proof they could offer was "We have seen the Lord!" "This Jesus hath God raised up, of whom we all are witnesses." And the world wants a proof to-day. It will not be satisfied with the Christian deduction that because Christ was divine He must have risen. It needs the converse argument—because He rose He must be divine. And so it still asks for proof that He rose. And what proof can we give? In former days men accepted the *ipse dixit* of Scripture. But now they will believe anything rather than Scripture. They will believe the Greek historians, or the Latin historians; they will believe Assyrian inscriptions or Egyptian hieroglyphics. They will accept thousands of unproved statements in so-called secular writings of all nations. But the Bible they will not accept unless it is supported from other sources. We must therefore offer them some other proof.

The modern mind is dominated by the thought that effects always follow causes. Nothing can be considered as a cause unless we can point to its effects. When therefore the Christian claims that a great power was introduced into the world after Christ's death,

he is met with the question: What has it done? What is it doing? Show that it is a power. The statements in your New Testament are not enough. Granted that the universal aspiration of men after a future life may incline us to expect that there may be one, we cannot prove it until we experience that future life for ourselves, until we creep out of this life by the gateway of death and discover for ourselves whether there is beyond it everything or nothing. You say that Jesus Christ has risen, and that His resurrection is a power. A power that effects nothing is no power. Show us the effects, here and now, that we may see and believe.

Now, it ought to be enough to point to the Christian Church. Christ's resurrection gave it birth; it has stood firm amid the shifting sands of time; it has seen the decay and fall of the great Roman Empire, and the rise of many another kingdom; it has reached its arms to every country and almost every island under heaven. And we might boldly claim that such a phenomenon, following upon the public execution of the Master whom Christians worship, could not have taken its rise from a delusion, an invention or a lie. The existence of the Church is a solid fact, and it is an effect which must spring from an adequate cause. And we can go further, and point to countless individuals whose lives have shown the power of the resurrection. There

have passed across the stage of history a procession of saints, young men and maidens, old men and children, a great multitude which no man can number, who have lived the Christ-like life in the strength of His risen life. To those that ask a reason for the hope that is in us, we can show all this. And to the Christian, it is proof, positive and convincing, enough and to spare.

But the non-Christian may still be dissatisfied. The proof is too vague. The past does not appeal to him. Other religions have enjoyed a long life and numbered more adherents than Christianity. The accounts of dead saints have probably been exaggerated; or he has never read them and doesn't want to read them. And above all, he says he might have some belief in the Christian Church if it were not for the Christians whom he sees before his eyes every day. If Christ really rose, it ought on their own showing to be a driving, impelling force that dominates every action and thought and word. Men ought to be able to recognize a Christian at a glance; he ought to be like a city set on a hill which cannot be hid; he ought to be visibly moved like trees in a wind if he is really born of the Spirit. His character ought to be so beautiful and strong and pure that everyone would be drawn to him and say, We will go with thee for we have seen that God is with thee. Where then is your proof that Christ is risen?

To begin with, it is not difficult to show that this kind of objection rests upon a fallacy. The objector will not see that the power of the resurrection, the " energy " of the Spirit, is potential, and exists forever conserved and undiminished. And if men do not make it kinetic, appropriate and make it actual, in their own lives, it does not follow that it has no existence. It is quite superficial and unscientific to argue that there is no living Christ because Christians are not perfect. But still the non-Christian will persist in answering that seeing is believing. And upon the followers of Christ therefore lies the overwhelming responsibility of showing him something that he can see, of exhibiting the power in their own person.

Look at some of the alleged witnesses. The narratives may be hard to reconcile, chronologically or geographically. But the individuals who saw the Lord may be taken as types of those who see the Lord to-day. Mary Magdalene is a type of pure womanhood, with all her seven demons long cast out; a type of all virgin souls of men or women who go through their daily life ever ready to hear the risen Master calling them by name. A joy or a sorrow, a gleam of beauty in nature or in art, even the daily round, the common task, will furnish all they need to ask. At any moment they hear the Lord saying " Mary," and they answer " Rabboni." To them, the power of

the resurrection is an abiding fire of love, an abiding contact with the divine. They are like the delicate instrument which needs no artificial wires to catch the faintest message from afar. Such souls are rare; and happy is the man who knows even one of them, and can call him friend.

Pure unsullied love will always be the first to see her Lord. But next to love comes penitence. The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. The first apostle had gone out into the night and wept bitterly. We know not how many scalding tears he had shed; we know not a single detail of the meeting between him and the Master. But we do know that the power of the resurrection transformed the conceited, over-confident, patronizing, but penitent fisherman into a veritable rock, the first stone in the great house of God. If we could only summon tears for our sins and weep bitterly, and then in the depths of our being, the secret place of the Most High, see the living Lord, we too should be transformed, and lifted out of our self-confidence, self-centeredness, self-indulgence, self-seeking, self-assertion, self-love, and we should become a proof of the resurrection.

Love and penitence cover all requirements for seeing the Lord. But the power of the resurrection has no limits in its manifold capacity to transform the thoughts of men. Two disciples, we read, were walking to Em-

maus, disappointment written on their faces. They had been looking for the consolation of Israel, for the coming of the divine kingdom, for the millennium of delight when the Messiah would be ruler of all the earth. Their hopes were those of the writer who had prayed a few years before: "Behold O Lord and raise up unto them their king, the son of David . . . that he may reign over Israel thy servant. And gird him with strength to break in pieces unrighteous rulers, to purge Jerusalem from the heathen that tread her down and destroy. . . . And there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king is the Lord Messiah." They had followed and reverenced the man Jesus, and had hoped that it was He who would redeem Israel. But He was dead. There was no doubt about it; crowds saw Him die. And their new-born hopes had met an untimely end, and had been buried in His grave. It was true that a group of hysterical women had come with a tale of angels and an empty tomb. But Him they saw not. And so the Messiah had not come after all; and the downtrodden Jewish people must still go on with their weary waiting for Him, as they had waited since the days of the prophets.

Ideals are grand things; ideals for ourselves, for society, for the nation, for humanity. But ideals will always prove chimeras if they are built upon an earthly and not a spiritual

foundation. The country is full of men and women who follow and reverence the character of the man Jesus, and are nobly spending their lives in pursuit of social ideals. Settlements, societies, acts of Parliament, personal influence: they have pointed to one or another form of activity, and they have hoped, oh so earnestly, that it was that which should have redeemed England. But the movement died, the society failed, the act of Parliament was not passed, or was passed and proved practically useless; and with it the hopes of the would-be reformers are dying or dead. It is the power of the resurrection which alone can transform their disappointment into a sure and certain hope. Nothing but the risen Christ in the hearts of men will redeem the drunkard, the adulterer, the extortioner, the murderer, the gambler, the cheat. England must be crucified with Christ, and rise to newness of life with Christ; and without that, nothing can save her. And the workers with the magnificent ideals will forever be disappointed, until they have seen the risen Lord, and laid their ideals before Him to be transformed; until He, and not merely their social schemes, shall have made their hearts burn within them and taught them the lessons of the Spirit of God.

One more type may claim our attention, a university student. He was trained in Greek philosophy and literature; a freeborn citizen

of the Roman Empire; a specialist in Hebrew literature and Rabbinic law and Midrash. He was thus in touch with the three great phases of the human thought of his day; up to date, widely read, and keen with a fine, youthful enthusiasm. But Saul of Tarsus found—not one more subject that he might add to his versatile accomplishments, but something which transformed them all. He learned to know the Man whom the Romans had crucified, whose cross the Jews hated as a stumbling block and the Greeks scorned as foolishness. As a Roman he was proud of his citizenship; he was proud of the splendid organization which welded men into one body, governed by the same laws, and owning allegiance to Cæsar. But he found that which lifted his imperialism into heavenly places. Our citizenship is in heaven, we are one body governed by the law of liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free; a body in which every man is a soldier, owning allegiance to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible. He was proud of his Jewish ancestry, and was never tired of insisting on its privileges. But he found that which transformed his Judaism into universalism. He had drunk deep into the fountains of Greek wisdom. But he found, as we must find if all our pursuit of knowledge is not to be a striving after wind, that the only wisdom worthy of the name was God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom which

hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the world; the mystery of Christ's representative self-sacrifice, of God's eternal self-limitation, of the completed atonement of God and man.

It is possible that we too are proud of our English citizenship, of our good birth, of our intellectual attainments. But we can count them as refuse until they are transformed and dedicated. Our life will be worthless until, like Paul, we have come to know the incarnate God and the power of His resurrection.

MARTIN

THE LIFE THAT KNOWS NO DEFEAT

GEORGE CURRIE MARTIN

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THE LIFE THAT KNOWS NO DEFEAT

Prof. G. Currie Martin, M.A., B.D.

"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." —Phil. 4 : 13.

These words constitute a great boast. Boasting is common enough, but justifiable boasting is not so common. It is true that humility is not the very highest quality in character, and that the greatest men have frequently astounded their contemporaries by the confidence of their utterances about their ability. Our Lord Himself found that one cause of the people's enmity lay in the statements He made about His own personality, and the claims He assumed as His own right. But here we find His great apostle Paul speaking in a note of absolute assurance that staggers us. The only justification of such a claim is that it should be verified in experience.

First, then, we want to look at the verification of this boast. At first sight, it is true, there does not seem very much justification for it. Paul writes this letter from prison. Now it would appear that the most obvious thing for him to do at the moment, if he were possest of the power to which he lays claim,

would be to escape from prison and go to the assistance of his various converts and churches. This very letter shows us that he had a longing so to do. To break prison only requires a certain amount of ingenuity. It is said that there are no bolts so strong, no fetters so heavy, no arrangement of a prison-house so ingenious that men cannot escape if they set themselves to accomplish the task. Paul never attempted it. If the most obvious and simple thing was not done, how are we to find a justification of the statement?

It will be remembered that a century or two ago one of our English poets was in prison, and in his cell he wrote a song that has floated down the years to our own day:

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Hearts innocent and quiet take
> That for a hermitage."

This was a wonderful accomplishment of the poet's imagination. To him the constraint of the prison became the refuge of the solitary, and he found reasons for thankfulness in the very circumstances of compulsory solitude.

When, in the days of the Scottish Covenant, they exiled Samuel Rutherford from his lovely parish of Anworth to the cold, gray desolation of Aberdeen, he was wont to write letters of comfort and consolation to his parishioners, and sometimes he dated them, not,

as we might expect, from the dreary prison-house at Aberdeen, but from "My Lord's Palace at Aberdeen." This was what his faith taught Rutherford, and transformed the place of confinement to a room in which he held high converse with his Lord. But Paul's accomplishment is more wonderful than either of these. For him the prison becomes a pulpit. They had confined him in Rome, that they might silence what the Roman historian called "the mischievous superstition" of Christianity, and, behold, he finds the prison a better place for extending his evangel than the free travel that had formerly been his lot. In this letter he tells us how the whole company of the imperial guard had heard the word of Christ, and those letters of his reached the utmost limits of the empire. Not only so, but they come down through all the centuries, until to-day we read in this word the same message of indomitable courage, and unconquerable confidence.

But, says someone, at any rate the apostle could not escape suffering and trial. No, he could not, but let us read that great autobiographical self-revelation—the Second Epistle to the Corinthians—and we find the way in which Paul dealt with such circumstances. Once on his missionary journeys the multitude stoned him. His attitude to every form of suffering is just as if he had been able to take the stones his persecutors threw at him,

raise them in his hands, and as he did so the stones had turned to bright and flashing gems, which he set upon his forehead as a triumphal diadem. This was the manner in which he treated all the trials that befell him. He made them subjects of boasting. "If I must boast I will boast of my suffering, my weakness, and my trial," he said. Here again, much more truly than had he escaped all, he overcomes in the power of his Lord.

Nor is death any terror to him. Again, in the pages of this letter we find him saying, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It is simply impossible to do anything with a man like this. There is no form of barrier known to human skill which will stop him, no form of terror the most demoniacal ingenuity can invent that will in the least degree dissuade him. Truly we find in Paul's experience this great boast completely verified —"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

Secondly, there lies in the words a note of victory. Paul is a victorious man, and I beg you to think for a moment or two of the forces that were arrayed against him. I speak of the special forms of enmity with which the apostle in his peculiar work was conversant. In the main there were three: First, the power of the Jew was a mighty force. It was the force of his own countrymen, and we all know how intense a patriot Paul was, and how difficult

it is for the patriot to resist the persuasion or the pressure of those he loves with such intense devotion. But not only were they his own countrymen—they were the people who possest the finest and most spiritual religion of that day—in fact, the most spiritual religion of any day, except that which grew out of it—Christianity itself. It was a religion not only hoary with antiquity, but able to point to vast achievements, and to a large element of spiritual power. Secondly, there were the Greeks. Now the Greeks stood for two things —the religion of beauty, and the religion of pleasure. They taught the world such lessons of loveliness, as it has not been able to surpass in all the centuries since. Even to-day we have to go to the school of Greek sculpture and the Greek architects in order to know some of the secrets of purest beauty. And they were the pleasure-loving folk. They preached the doctrine of enjoyment of life to the full. All the world had listened to the message and thereby it increased its stock of joy. And, thirdly, there was the might of Rome. Rome stood for many things, but in this particular connection let us confine our attention to two—her sense of justice, and her might of civilization. Rome had evolved such a system of law that upon it is based the great legal systems of modern Europe. And the effectiveness of her civilization was such that probably never from that day to this

has the world been so safe a place in which to travel.

Now, these three mighty powers were arrayed against the apostle, and he had to contend with them, and, if the words of the text are true, he not only contended with them but felt he had the secret of their subjugation. This might only be an interesting historical fact, if it were not that these same forces are arrayed against the Church of Christ to-day, and the individual Christian has now a battle upon which to enter similar to that the apostle had to fight. We do not indeed call the forces by the same names, but the realities are there. Do we not all know of churches which pride themselves upon their past achievement, upon the correctness of their creed, or the antiquity of their ritual, or the splendor of their worldly power? Has Christendom ever been free from such conflict, and is it not one of the hardest tasks of the spiritual church to-day to resist and vanquish such enemies within her own ranks? Was it only the Greeks that preached the popular gospel of pleasure? Are there no echoes of it amongst ourselves? Have not young men and women ever in their ears the voices which bid them fill life with beauty, with gaiety, and with gladness? Take the cup of life, and fill up to the brim, and drain it, care for nothing but pleasure! say these voices. If ever an age listened to that message it is our own. And,

finally, the gospel of the might of empire, and the greatness of civilization has never been so loudly proclaimed as to-day. Are there not many who suppose that the great glory of England lies in the extension of her imperial might? Are the English people not told to acquire by any means, but certainly to acquire; and to hold what they have acquired, with an iron hand, if it must be, but certainly to hold? And, further, those who are most keenly interested in the spread of the gospel of Christ in foreign lands are often met with the argument that might well have come from an old Roman. "Go to China, or to India," we are told, "and take there all that Western science has taught you, all that modern discovery has been able to find, share with these people all knowledge except the knowledge of the cross." Often, when we are brought into relation with primitive peoples, men will tell us, "Yes, make them good citizens of the empire, teach them how to increase our commerce, how to be of advantage to our money-making endeavor, and once you have civilized them, perhaps one day, far off, you may speak the message of Christ." To a very large number the order of events is, civilization first, Christianity afterwards. There are many even within the ranks of the Church who seem to hold that view. It is said that the religion of the Sikhs in northern India is sometimes phrased by its followers in one brief utterance

—" Victory! Victory!" That is the " good morning " and " good evening " of Sikhdom. Such is their phrase of confident assurance. I have sometimes wondered whether the modern Church of Christ dare say the same thing. Could we, in the face of the world, declare " Victory! Victory! That is the ' good morning ' and ' good evening ' of Christendom?" But if we cannot do so, ought we not to feel ashamed for Paul to do so? For have not we the intervening centuries to add their witness to the faith which he preached, and in the power of which he lived?

Thirdly, in these words we find the note of vision. " In him that strengtheneth me." All Paul's religion centered in the person of his Lord. Whenever you come into the secret places of Paul's inner life you are made aware of one unforgetable event—the event which altered the whole current of his experience—the vision of his Lord on the way to Damascus. Not only before King Agrippa, but in face of all inquiries, Paul would have said " I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." There is no great religion in the world that has not acquired its power, and so long as it had any vitality, preserved it through the strength of its vision. Buddha was able to reach his great achievements, because of the vision he had seen of the world's need, and the means whereby he felt that it might be met.

Mohammed found in his religion the light of the vision of the one God he had beheld in the solitudes of the trackless desert, and whatever might has attached to that great faith has been found where such a vision has been renewed. It is not the power of the sword, but the power of its vision that has made Islam what it is, and Christianity is a religion of vision. The older faith of Judaism said that "To see God was to die," the new religion says "To see God is to live." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," said its Founder. "No one knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him," and he who knoweth God and Him whom God hath sent has the secret of eternal life.

From vision, then, comes power. Power, in the first instance, of pardon, in the second instance, of peace, and, in the third instance, of achievement. But the vision must not be only for one occasion—it must be a vision that is perpetually renewed. For Paul there was nothing so certain as the presence of Christ, and the lives that are lived in that consciousness are the lives that know conquest. It is said that there was once a great musician visiting this country, and that his host took him to church with him on one occasion. A week later he extended the invitation again, but the musician replied, "No, I will not go with you unless you can take me to hear someone who will tempt me to do the impossible."

" Tempt us to do the impossible "—that is what Christ is ever doing. Nothing can have seemed more hopeless than the quest upon which He sent Paul. Standing on the threshold of the Roman world, He beckoned to the apostle to follow Him in order that He might bring all that proud Roman empire to His feet. Nothing could have seemed more quixotic and unpractical than that, yet the apostle not only accepted the challenge, but here, after long years of experience, not any more a young man with untried enthusiasm and untested zeal, he says, " I can do all things," and, as we have seen, the boast was no vain one, but a reality that can be tested by his life.

These, then, are the tests of a true Christian experience. Are they to be found in our lives—these notes of verification, of victory and vision? If not, it must be ours to catch them, or to recall them, and the only secret of their acquirement or renewal is to come into close and intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ through His Spirit, whereby our hearts also will be assured in the day of conflict, strengthened in the hour of temptation, and made more than conqueror through Him that loveth us.

MOFFAT

THE CHURCH AND MODERN THOUGHT

JAMES DAVID MOFFAT

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THE CHURCH AND MODERN THOUGHT

JAMES D. MOFFAT, D.D., LL.D.

"Increasing in the knowledge of God."—Col. 1 : 10.

THIS is one short clause in a comprehensive prayer. Paul's chief desire was that the Colossian saints should live a life of obedience to the will of God. To this end he prayed that they might know God's will, "be filled with the knowledge of his will," and that they might "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Paul was convinced that if these petitions should be answered, two results would follow: first, they "would be fruitful in every good work," and second, they would be "increasing in the knowledge of God." These two results must therefore be regarded by us as results that were esteemed very highly by the apostle Paul.

These two—abounding good works and increasing knowledge—are so closely conjoined by the apostle that we may consider them inseparable in fact. They are, however, separable in thought and for discussion; but we should not overlook their connection. Doing good out of regard for the will of God may be the condition of growth in the knowledge of

God. Some knowledge of God is essential to the life of obedience; but knowledge of God that is not employed in the obedient endeavor to do good may lack or lose its power of growth. On the other hand, putting religious knowledge to good use in the spirit of devotion to God must give to the individual a personal knowledge of God obtained in no other way.

In the first instance, this increasing knowledge of God must have been purely a personal attainment. But as Christians compared notes it would become evident that there had been a common growth in the knowledge of God. Differences would also be discovered. While the community might rejoice in the growth of its knowledge as compared with that of other communities or of former generations, it might also lament the growing differences and endeavor to remove them by friendly discussion. Without any additional supernatural revelation of God there would seem to be possible an increasing knowledge of God in a Christian community, as a result of a life of obedience to the divine will.

But the increased knowledge of God may come in other ways. The increase of general knowledge must exert some influence upon the existing stock. A normal mind will not tolerate incongruity. When a new item of knowledge is taken into the mind a place must be made for it, and this often necessitates

modifying some conceptions already there, or even the expulsion of some beliefs because they seem to be inconsistent with the newly accepted belief. Knowledge of all sorts is a construction of the knowing mind, so built up as to harmonize its parts and to be true to what is believed to be reality. Even when confronted by what is believed to be a divine revelation of truth, the Christian mind is compelled to interpret the communication and to employ for this purpose its own knowledge gathered from other sources. Hence, with the same words of Scripture before them two good persons may derive conceptions that are not identical. What we bring with us to the study of the Bible has much to do with determining what particular meanings we carry away from that study.

But the Bible is not the sole source of our knowledge of God. God's works of creation and of providence afford information concerning him. The only way we can find out what God has foreordained is by reading history, studying science and observing the times in which we live. Since, according to our common creed, God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, it must come to pass, and we must know it, before we can trace it to God and draw any inference from its happening. We must study the event itself and learn its relations to other events and in its place in the whole movement before we can know its sig-

nificance and what light its occurrence may reflect upon the purpose of God.

No one who is familiar with the great strides that human knowledge has been taking in the past century can be ignorant of the very important bearing this modern thought has exercised upon the intelligent man's conception of God. The history of the material universe as set before us by science, now almost wholly devoted to the evolutionary principle, has apparently limited the creative energy of God to the mere origination of the ultimate elements of matter in the far distant past. But in leading us to think of God's method as evolutionary in time and as creative only in the beginning of time, modern thought has made possible a conception of God that is immensely in advance of the conception held in earlier ages. We may now think of God as working out an eternal plan. He does not put forth creative fiats—just as an inferior being might do upon impulse, or upon discovering in some part of his world a need of something unprovided for. We must think of him rather as seeing the very end from the very beginning, and as so creating the ultimate elements of matter and endowing them with such properties and so disposing of them that millenniums of progress from lower to higher stages became possible and actual. Our knowledge of the physical universe is not yet sufficiently matured to enable us to form any definite

conception of what " creation " is; but I believe it is rational to rejoice that we do not live in a world where the exercises of creative power are often needed and occur so frequently as to weaken confidence; for we have learned, at least in these modern times, to rely upon the regular working of every force in nature. It is this confidence in what we call the uniformity of nature that has given such a rapid development to our ability to control physical forces and make them serve our ends.

I think also that it is not too much to say that our theistic conception has been improved by the scientific and philosophic tendencies of our time. Human thought has shown tendencies to swing to the extremes of deism or pantheism. But the theism of to-day strives to embody what is positive in both these extremes—at least what has been attractive. Deism exalts God above the world, but puts Him at such a distance from it that we think of Him as indifferent to what goes on here, and disposed to let men bear its ills without sympathy or assistance. Pantheism so identifies God with the world as to make it almost impossible for us to think of Him as personal and conscious. On the other hand, what a strong tendency has been shown in scientific thought to identify physical force with the very will of God! I cannot feel that the identity of force and will has been established, but this very tendency to establish

identity shows the desire of the intelligent scientist to obliterate the distance between God and His world, which the deist has endeavored to magnify. Again, since evolution has revealed a plan that through the ages as "one increasing purpose runs" the Creator is not to be so identified with the universe as to render His intelligent planning inconceivable. It is not too much to claim that modern scientific speculation has certainly helped to revive the idea of the apostle Paul that God is both personal and immanent, but our conception of the divine immanence has significance for us that it probably did not have for Paul, and it is destined to play a more important part in our theology.

I mention these modern conceptions of God to illustrate how modern thought may give us increased knowledge of God. Yet it is not new knowledge that supplants former conceptions. The continuity of belief has not been broken. It is only that human conceptions have undergone modification as knowledge has increased. The God known in Old Testament times became better known to New Testament readers, and He is still better known to men who know so much more about the world that God made and governs than men could know nineteen centuries ago.

But there is another consequence of the growth of human knowledge that must be dealt with. There are most perplexing prob-

lems created which are difficult to solve. What is offered for our acceptance may be truth or error. If we fight it as error and it proves later to be truth, or if we accept it as truth and it comes to be seen to be error, we have wasted time, disarranged our stock of knowledge and created a state of doubt that is difficult to get rid of. Until we have satisfied our own minds of the truth of what comes to us as modern thought, we cannot make the new adjustments its presence in our minds requires; and when we are fully satisfied it is still a question to what extent the old conceptions and beliefs must be changed. Few men have the logical insight of theologians and philosophers. Besides, many of these problems are far-reaching. Their solution demands extensive research and may depend upon results gathered from different departments of human thinking. Only the few who are equipped for this kind of work can hope to make progress in solving such problems. Yet some of these problems are fundamental, nearly all of them are important, and only a few can be treated as trivial. So pressing have some of these questions become, so well supported are they by an abundance of modern scholarship and an array of distinguished scholars, that alarm is exprest and men talk of the crisis of belief. The Christian Church may be in no immediate danger, for these great debates are not known by the masses of

church members; but there is a very real danger that the Church may lose its influence over a large portion of the most scholarly men.

In these conditions what should be the policy of the Church? I assume that the leaders of the Church, its theologians, philosophers, scholars, must continue to meet these problems squarely in the intellectual field and carry on discussion; not in the spirit of controversy but in that more modern spirit of honest investigation, that leads, not to the triumph of a party, but to the construction of the temple of truth. We need not fear the final result. Some errors of human source may be abandoned, some modes of expressing truth may be modified, some new points of view may be taken, many technical terms may be dropt as creating false impressions; but the new truths that may finally emerge, will be seen to stand in harmonious relation to the essentials of Christian belief.

But meanwhile, the Church cannot stand still and wait for the contest to end. Its work to-day is the same that it has ever been, and it is as greatly needed as ever. What then should be the attitude of the ministers and members of our churches while the intellectual contest goes on?

There are three possible courses: The Church may regard what is new and apparently in conflict with any article of its creed,

as something to be rejected and denounced as inimical to the cause of Christ, and it may endeavor to convince the world of the truth of its entire creed. It may in the second place relegate creed to the background, treat belief as a matter for individual choice, and expend its energies in ethical discussions. It may proclaim to men "the creed is indifferent, it is the conduct that is important. Salvation is not by faith but by character." There is something commendable in both these positions; there is something blameworthy in each of them. A third course—that combines the good of these two—would seem to be the wisest policy. Let the type of human character that Christ has set before the world as the ideal be presented always as the chief end that the Church is endeavoring to have realized, and let the beliefs that inspire men to strive after that end and encourage and assist them to reach it, be urged as the divinely appointed means whereby that end is to be attained. This is no middle ground, this is no compromise between those who seem disposed to make creed everything and those who make conduct everything. It is a recognition of the attitude of the Christian Church when it has been doing its best service in the world. It is a course of action that may be pursued in, at least, comparative independence of any of the great intellectual disputes that may be going on in the world.

It assumes that it is not God's desire that all men should think alike or form the same opinions. Certainly such identity does not seem to be attainable in this life, and I do not see how we can hope that it may ever be so. The worship of truth for its own sake, of which we sometimes hear laudation, is the worship of an abstraction, and too often means devotion to one's own thoughts. All truths are not equally important. Our very life depends upon some truths, but there are others of which we may say it is wholly indifferent whether we know them or not. But even of the most important truths it may be said that their importance arises from their relation to our conduct. It is inconceivable that God, either as revealed in the Bible or in nature, should make heaven or hell depend on a mere assent to any one truth or any body of truths; and yet this has been seriously supposed to be the case by some critics of the Christian Church. If there is any one truth taught in both the Old and the New Testaments more clearly than any other concerning God's will it is this: that the one thing He most values in men is righteousness. The sum and the substance of all His requirements of man is that man shall love God and his neighbor as himself. Personal and social, religious and ethical character is thus emphasized as man's chief end.

Moreover, this relationship of creed and

character was that which Jesus Christ recognized and emphasized in His teaching. He did not seem to care to correct the opinions of men except as that might bear on their conduct. It is surprising how small a proportion of His teaching can be classed as theological and how large a proportion of it was ethical. It is true that He assumed the current creed to be true except in the few cases in which He would free it from the additions and perversions of tradition, and we cannot doubt that His ethical teaching had a broad basis in religious beliefs. But what He held before men as the ideal toward which they were ever to strive was a character personally and socially righteous. He began His ministry with the Sermon on the Mount and He ended it by commanding His disciples to teach all men to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them. It vexes my soul to hear ministers speak disparagingly of the Sermon on the Mount, as if it were the trial sermon of a young minister who preached differently near the close of his life. It is still to be regarded as setting forth in illustrative principles the kind of men we are to strive to become. It is the ideal, altho it does not specify all the means we are to employ to attain that ideal.

And Paul, esteemed the one great theological writer of the New Testament, never seems to lose sight for a moment of the Christlike

character of believers as the goal toward which they were to strive, and his doctrines are no sooner expounded and defended than they are applied practically to the regulation of ethical conduct.

Now may I ask you, by way of contrast, to note the change of relationship between creed and conduct that the Church has at times exhibited?

The well known "Apostles' Creed" is simply a series of propositions to which one may give his assent. There is nothing in it calling for consent. The Nicene Creed is an expansion of these propositions and the Athanasian Creed a still more expanded statement of these propositions. But in all three of these ecumenical creeds there is not a clause in which the most devout reciter can pledge his obedience to God, or recognize his obligation to live a righteous life. In the last of these creeds the assent is made a condition of salvation—without that assent man perishes, altho it is not said that mere assent will save. It may be said that it was not necessary to incorporate in the creed any statement about conduct, or any pledge to cultivate righteousness, for that would be taken for granted. And it is possible that priests were faithful in instructions and exhortations. Still, when the emphasis of the great creeds of the Church was placed exclusively on the things to be believed, and the things to be

done were not even mentioned, it does not seem so strange that a great moral reformation was needed in the fifteenth century. It is true that reformation had a doctrinal basis and required a change of policy; but it was the enlightened conscience of Luther that was so mortally offended by what he witnessed in Rome that led to his protest. It was conscience, too, in John Calvin that urged him on and dominated his whole career in Geneva.

Luther made classic his doctrine of "Justification by faith and not by works," but he so emphasized his doctrinal statement that the important place that belongs to works has often been neglected. Even Luther himself thought the Epistle of James gave too prominent a place to human works. It is not uncommon to hear in evangelical and evangelistic circles works disparaged, and the broader term "salvation" is often substituted for Luther's "justification," and then it is taught that "Salvation is by faith and not by works." The purpose of the Protestant doctrine was to exclude human works from the ground upon which pardon and restoration to the favor of God should be expected. Pardon is purely gracious. But this change in a sinner's relation to God is his initiation into the true Church of God and occupies but a moment of time. From that moment the justified one is under the solemn obligation of "working out his own salvation with fear and

trembling, for it is God which worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure." If salvation be used to cover the entire process by which a sinner becomes whole, then it is proper to say "Salvation is of works—but works that proceed from faith." The Protestant doctrine, properly understood, allows no one to believe that he may expect God to do for him what he can do for himself. No decree of God, no act of grace, will do the works for us which God's law and Christ's commands require us to do.

It is chiefly due to this disparaging of the place of works that the Scriptural teachings concerning rewards have been so neglected in modern preaching. The fear that men may think it possible for them to deserve something from God and so overlook their dependence on grace, has made us timid in our teaching that believers are to be rewarded according to their works, in this life and in that which is to follow. Earning is not in itself sinful, nor is it futile for us to endeavor to earn anything that is not placed beyond our reach. We cannot, indeed, earn our justification for that is an unearned gift. It cannot be purchased. But if we are to be rewarded for our works and in proportion to our works, works that we do in obedience to the commands of our Saviour, then our rewards are to be earned, or they can never be enjoyed. The more deeply we can impress

Christians with the thought that they are making their heaven by the fidelity and earnestness with which they follow Christ in abounding in good works, the more earnest and faithful may we expect them to become. We can avoid the confusion of the Roman Catholic theology by excluding all thought of works from the ground of our reconciliation to God, and yet give to works that place in the Christian life that both revelation and conscience assign to them.

I am not pleading that the ethical side of preaching shall be the only side, nor that it shall be made so prominent that the creedal side shall be lost sight of. I would have these two sides placed in their proper relation to each other. One is the end toward which all Christian endeavor should strive; the other is the means that Christianity provides both to urge men to enter upon the life that leads to that goal and to inspire and assist them as they pursue that way. Creed has value, but only as means to this Christian end, and the value of any creed is to be measured by its tendency to promote that end. Character is the end, conduct is character in the making, creed is the guiding principle and the inspiration of conduct.

Creed may change, it may grow, it is desirable that it should grow, becoming fuller and clearer and freer from doubt, but these changes should render it more effective as a

guide and inspiration to right conduct. I refer now to the creed of the individual, not to that of the organization. It may be desirable to shorten the creed of the organization so that the greater emphasis may be given to the end in view. But all the beliefs of an individual that are true and sincerely held contribute to his progress in righteousness.

Putting the creed into this relationship to the Christian's final goal gives us ground for our confidence that no serious changes in this kind of creed are impending. If we believe in a righteous God, who desires above all else that His moral creatures shall grow into the stature of perfect manhood in Christ, we need not fear that the growth of knowledge, the knowledge of His universe, will furnish obstacles to man's upward progress. The belief that is helpful will prove to be permanent.

But the Church must stand for belief, especially for those beliefs that have contributed so much toward the uplifting of humanity. It must stand for these beliefs, not for their own sake, if I may so express it, but because they tend to bring men into personal relations to Jesus Christ. It is not belief in doctrines that brings us into sonship with God but faith in a person, faith in the Christ. But once united to Christ, beliefs have much to do with intensifying loyalty to our Lord and Savior. We cannot assume an attitude of indifference toward them, nor allow our confi-

dence in them to be weakened by doubtful disputations or superficial objections.

In the interest of ethics, rather than that of systematic theology, we may view with concern the tendency to take lower views of the person of Christ than those which have proved so effective for good in the past nineteen centuries.

The metaphysical aspects of the Christological problem may be modified, but the world can not afford to lose the ethical effects of the affection, trust and devotion created in the hearts of men because of their belief in His divinity.

His resurrection as an abstract proposition, or a mere event in history, may be regarded as an academic question; but when we consider the direct effects of belief in the testimony of the apostles to His resurrection, namely, the founding and perpetuating of the Christian Church, with all its civilizing and sanctifying results, we can not be indifferent spectators to what is going on in the intellectual world.

When we note the place of the cross in apostolic, Catholic, Protestant and evangelical preaching, we cannot believe that after all the death of Jesus was nothing more than the ending of a human life. We may be indifferent to theories of sacrifice and atonement: but when we meet men who refuse to accept pardon as offered in the gospel preaching, because of their own deep-seated conviction that

their sins deserve punishment, shall we refrain from saying to them, "God has provided for meeting this demand of the human conscience?" We may deny that God needed that death, but can we deny that men need it?

I cannot, indeed, accept the pragmatic test that makes usefulness the sole or chief evidence of truth, but surely twenty centuries of usefulness among people of all races and conditions in life, is not to be lightly esteemed as confirmatory evidence of those beliefs that have undoubtedly promoted ethical advance.

Let our scholars seek to determine the authorship of the books of the Bible, and the circumstances of their composition, even if their conclusions shall be such as to reverse all our traditional beliefs; meanwhile we may continue to use its contents for religious and ethical purposes as heretofore. Systematic theology may be revolutionized if some of these critical contentions prevail, for the Bible can then be employed by theologians only as other literature is appealed to. But the Scriptures can still be used effectively for the doctrine that bears directly on life, "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

I am afraid I may be understood as underestimating the importance of some cherished beliefs now "under fire." I am not suggesting that the Church give any of these up until

intellectual honesty compels their change or abandonment, but I believe that the Church at work may refuse to be alarmed or anxious. Let us rather trust our scholars and thinkers to meet these issues as they arise. But let us not be drawn away from our proper work of laboring together with God for the Christianizing of our fellow-men, who do not so much need to have their ideas cleared and harmonized as to have their conduct brought into conformity with the will of God. If the Church devotes its energies and enthusiasm to this kind of work it will be apparent to the men of the world that the Church is not a mere philosophical association, whose members are chiefly interested in certain abstract propositions; nor an ethical society, debating ethical questions, but doing little or no practical work toward the ethical improvement of men; but an organization of men whose beliefs are principles that work practically toward their own moral and religious development and whose lives are devoted to securing a similar development in all mankind.

The cry, "Back to Christ, back to the apostolic Church," has a meaning that can only be determined when we know the motive of those who utter it. But I venture to say that if we go back to the apostolic age for our knowledge, we shall know less than we do now. If we go back for our theological conceptions we may be better fitted for living in the first

century than in the twentieth. But if we go back to the apostolic age for our knowledge of how closely correlated creed and conduct should be, and the order in which they should be regarded, we shall be making a forward and not a backward movement.

Nor will this devotion to work, and to care for creed only as it is related to work, hinder our growth in knowledge. I believe it will leave us freer to accept truth when it comes to us properly authenticated. Our strongest prejudices are connected with our theoretic systems of thought. Whatever threatens the integrity of our system is for that reason alone often denied even a hearing. There is a partizan loyalty that must be reckoned with. It is almost impossible to secure any change in a political creed—except to avoid defeat. A similar conservatism is often exhibited by the advocates of a philosophical system; and it is to be feared that a theological system may be guarded in a similar way. If we wish to know the truth we must keep our minds open to receive it, whenever its evidence is sufficient, whatever may be our fear as to the effect of it on our other beliefs. It is just as dangerous to refuse to accept a truth as it is to accept an error. In either case we are somewhat heretical.

My conclusion then is that the policy for the Church of our times should be that suggested by Paul's prayer for the Colossians.

Our first and most earnest desire should be to know the will of God, in order that we may walk worthy of our Lord; and then our lives will surely abound in good works, and we will be free to increase our knowledge of God. And this will be a kind of knowledge that we can rely upon and put to the best of uses.

MOFFATT

THE COURAGE OF RELIGION

JAMES MOFFATT

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THE COURAGE OF RELIGION

JAMES MOFFATT, D.D.

"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul."—1 Sam. 27 : 1.

BUT he did not perish by the hand of Saul. He lived to pronounce a eulogy, and a generous eulogy, upon his dead foe. Saul perished first; his attack seemed irresistible, but it came to nothing, and David's fear proved vain.

Thus do even strong, religious natures often make trouble for themselves out of a future about which they know next to nothing. David was terribly discouraged at this moment. The fond hope which he had cherished of succeeding to a high position in the kingdom had ebbed away. Wherever he turned, he saw nothing but the prospect of further peril and privation, whose end, sooner or later, meant defeat. Saul's resources were so numerous, and his power was so versatile, that the result of the struggle seemed to David to be merely a question of time.

Now, forethought is one thing. We have to be on the alert against the risks of life and open-eyed in face of any horrible combination which may threaten our position or affect our interests injuriously. But it is another thing

altogether to collapse weakly in despair of heart before apprehensions and anxieties which may turn out to be quite unfounded. In the early part of last century a young scientist once wrote: "It has been a bitter mortification to me to digest the conclusion that the race is for the strong, and that I shall practically do little more but be content to admire the strides others make in science." It was Charles Darwin. He was in bad health, and bad health is apt to bring low spirits. Yet Darwin lived to do work which made others only too glad to follow his strides in science. That is one instance of the misjudgments which we are prone to make about our future, and David's bitter cry is just another.

We can all see how wrong it is for a religious man to yield thus to depression, and how foolish this perverse habit is, but surely we can also feel how natural it is to lose heart and courage for the moment. Only those who have had to make the effort know how difficult it is to be brave at certain times in life. I am speaking not of the courage required for some enterprise or heroic action, but of the quieter courage which holds depression at bay, which braces the soul against anxiety and which enables people to be composed and firm under circumstances of hardship, when doubts as to our own usefulness and prospects occur, or when the pressure of things seems to thwart and even to deny any providence of God within

our sphere of life. At such moments, the strain almost overpowers us. David was living the anxious life of a hunted creature, like Hereward the Wake, or Bruce in the Athole country, or Wallace in Ayrshire and the North, obliged to be on his guard against repeated surprises, his nerves aquiver with the tension of pursuit. As he bitterly complained, Saul was chasing him like a partridge among the hills. True, he had first succeeded in outwitting his foe, but at night reaction came over him like a wave. How long could this guerrilla warfare go on? One day the fugitive pretender would be sure to fall into an ambush! He could not expect always to foil the attack of his enemies! And so thinking he lost his heart. "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul."

We must be on our guard against such moments of reaction, especially toward evening, when after the tiring day the body is too exhausted to help the mind against the inroad of oracle fears. Then doubts about our faith and health and work and income rise and shape themselves into dark possibilities of evil, and feelings are apt to get the better of our self-possession, and faith is shaken for the moment. It is a great part of life's management to be on our guard against such apprehensions. Towards night, or when you are run down, whenever reaction sets in, the judgment and the content of faith are apt to be

disturbed by fears which either vanish or at any rate shrink to their true proportions in the light of the morning. You are bound to remember that, and to lay your account with it.

The mood is almost constitutional with some. Owing to inherited disposition or to imperfect training, some are tempted to dwell repeatedly upon the darker side of things. They are highly strung, by nature. Their sensitive hearts get easily deprest. The sense of danger, which acts upon certain people like a pacific stimulus, only serves to damp their courage. They belong to the class for which Bunyan, with all the generosity of a strong nature, felt such evident sympathy—Mrs. Despondency, Miss Much-Afraid, Mr. Fearing, Mr. Feeble-Mind, the ready inaction of Giant Despair and of Castle Doubting.

At the same time, neither circumstances nor character can altogether explain the occasional failure of moral courage in life. David, for example, lived in the open air; his body was strong; there was nothing morbid about his habits of life; he loved music and fighting. But nevertheless he was subject to fits of depression and dismay, which discolored life and made God seem actually indifferent or hostile to him. Now, what is to be done, when the spirit is thus overwhelmed within us?

In the first place, there is usually something that can be done. Action is one of the best

means of banishing idle shadows from the path. There is this to be said for David, that he never allowed self-pity to benumb his faculties. Despair made him energetic; it drove him at this crisis to seek shelter outside the boundaries of the country for himself and his household. Instead of folding his hands and letting things drift, he did his best to secure a haven for his family and to provide as well as he could for himself. Such is the first note of practical courage in our religious life. Often, to lose heart means, with us, to lose vigor. People brood on their difficulties and perplexities until hardship is allowed to paralyze their faculties of resistance. Now David's example summons us to face our troubles and to make the best of them, instead of sitting down to bemoan ourselves as the victims of fate. We all have our moments of cowardice. Thank God if they are only moments. Thank God if we have enough faith and nerve left to rise, as David did, even with a heavy heart, and put our hand to some business of the day. The mere feeling of movement will help to raise our courage. It will inspire us with the conviction that we are not meant to be mere driftwood, at the mercy of the wild risks and chances of the current. Our very proverb about "rising to the occasion" is based upon this truth. And to rise to the occasion means that we shake off the selfish torpor of self-pity and depression, standing up to

grapple somehow with the difficulties of our lot.

The second mark of returning courage is to get away from the circle of our own feelings, and this is the escape of faith. Remember what David forgot for the moment—God's purpose and God's faithfulness. Long ago he had been chosen from the sheepfold for a career which neither he nor anyone else anticipated. God had lifted him from the country to the court. His vocation had opened up, and now, altho everything appeared to contradict this purpose, could it have failed? Could the will of God be shattered or recalled? Was the past experience of His favor accidental or delusive? Such is the heart's logic of the religious man. It is in fact the underlying faith in providence which rallies and restores our nature in its broken hours. Newman once called it the true religion of Great Britain. "What Scripture illustrates from its first page to its last," he declared, "is God's providence; and that is nearly the only doctrine held with a real assent by the mass of religious Englishmen. Hence the Bible is so great a solace and refuge to them in trouble." The reason why people draw hope and encouragement in this way is that religion means not simply an ordered view of the universe, which excludes caprice and tyranny alike, but a sense of the divine control and care for the individual. A vague impres-

sion of providence would not rally anybody. What is needed to reinforce our moral strength is the conviction of God's personal interest in the single life, and of a wise, loving Will which never fails anyone who loyally follows it at all hazards. No outsider can form any idea of the change produced in a human soul by this resolute trust in the higher responsibility of God. The center is changed from nervous worry about oneself to a pious reliance on the care of the Lord, and a real but unaccountable sense of security passes into the very secrets of the soul. According to our temperament it takes many forms, from quiet calm to an exulting confidence, but in every form this faith does its perfect work by putting the entire concern of life into God's sure keeping.

Here, then, lies another remedy for nervousness and agitation about our prospects. Even in your hours of panic, when life seems brought to nothing, you can reflect: "After all, I am the object of my Father's care and purpose. I can trust Him absolutely. He has put me here and been with me hitherto. I am not left to myself. I cannot, I will not, believe that He has grown weary of the responsibility for what He made." To say that in your heart is not vanity; it is the sheer trust of faith, won from long experience and still to be verified during the days to come. Unknown as your future may be, you are at the

disposal of One whom you have learned to trust, whose management of life you are prepared to accept, not coldly but with a steady and even a cheerful consent. The deepest thing you know about your life is that you are His choice and charge and handiwork.

That naturally opens out into a third source of courage, namely, gratitude. Faith, in order to do its perfect work, needs to pass from dull submission and acquiescence into a habit of thankfulness to God. The spirit of praise ministers to our sense of God's reality by calling up before our mind and heart those acts in which we see His character and from which we are intended to gain a firmer impression of His continuous and personal interest in ourselves. When we thank God, we realize Him more profoundly and intimately than ever. Too often, I am afraid, most of us are thankful to get past some difficulty, and if we remember it at all it is to congratulate ourselves secretly upon the skill and good fortune which carried us over the jolt in the road. But these steps and stages should be precious to the soul. They ought to be accumulating for us, as the years go by, a steady faith in God's sure faithfulness. Now that is impossible unless we are in the habit of saying to ourselves, as each favor comes: "This is the doing of God. I thank thee for this my Father. Thou art very good to me." Dejection is frequently the result of nothing more

than a failure to practise this habit of thankfulness. We forget to praise God for His daily mercies, and so they pass away from us without leaving any rich deposit of assurance, as they would have done if we had owned His hand in every one. Now the full good of any deliverance and help is not merely the outward benefit which it confers upon our life. The relief is something. But surely we are also intended to win from it a new confirmation of our faith in God's character and a deeper apprehension of His purpose in relation to ourselves. The repeated acts of God within our personal experience are so many glimpses into the constancy and truth of His will, and it is our privilege to use those, from time to time, in order to learn how surely He can be depended upon. David seems to have forgotten this, for the time being. He had rejoiced over his recent exploit, but he had not allowed it to bear home to him the sense of God's unfailing care, and that was one reason why he lay open to misgivings and fear. It is always so, in human experience, when we face the future without having won from the past a more settled faith in the continuity of God's living will.

Such are some of the methods by means of which religion ministers to strength and constancy of life. Courage indeed varies with our disposition and our training. "The French courage," Byron wrote once to Mur-

ray, "proceeds from vanity, the German from phlegm, the Turkish from fanaticism and opium, the Spanish from pride, the English from custom, the Dutch from obstinacy, the Russian from insensibility, but the Italian from anger." A generalization like this is always loose, but it serves to remind us how many forces in life will call out courage; an inspiriting example, sympathy, indignation, pity, the sense of self-respect—any of these will often keep us from breaking down and giving way. Faith can pour strength along these and other channels, but most directly of all it helps us, if it is real, to be self-possest and brave by calling up before us the entire compass of the situation. Where we fail is in forgetting to include the greatest element of all, or in undervaluing it. We leave God out of our estimate. David said, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." Was there no more in his life than that? I and Saul? What about God? Had life resolved itself into a mere trial of strength between David and his foe? Was there no longer any providence in it? What of the splendid confession before Goliath, "The Lord who delivered me from the power of the lion and the bear will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine?" Ah, there spoke the true David, the man after God's own heart, who recognized God's hand in the action and passion of his days, and who was no more sure of his

own existence than of God's answer to the faith and effort of the soul.

The sterling courage of religion is to be satisfied with this assurance, to win it from experience and to hold it by due care of the mind and body and by a habit of sincere thankfulness to God. It may be that for a time your life is very different from what you expected. You may have to face difficult passages and dark turns when it is not easy to feel much more than the annoyance and uncertainty and strain that sometimes crowd upon you with disturbing force. There are days when you scarcely venture to look ahead, in case you are unnerved by the prospect. It seems as if almost everything conspired to strip life of its just hope and vitality. When such clouds of physical reaction and brain-weariness come down, will you believe that God has not abandoned you? Do not reckon up nervously this chance and that, pitting the one against the other, but fall back on what you know of God's character and goodness in the past, till His word and witness put some fresh hope into your soul.

> Say not, The struggle naught availeth,
> The labor and the wounds are vain;
> The enemy faints not, nor faileth
> And as things have been, they remain;

say it not, even in your heart. Believe it not. What does remain is the undying interest of

God in you. What faints not, nor faileth, is this redeeming purpose. Don't give way. Whatever you do, do not lose heart and hope, under the gray sky. Tell yourself to wait, to wait for the living God, and see. And you will see what thousands of men and women have rejoiced to see, that, whoever fails you, whatever may be thrust on you or taken from you, nothing, neither life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, will be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

MONTET

MARY OF BETHANY

EDOUARD MONTET

Dean of the faculty of the University of Geneva since 1897; vice-rector, since 1908; professor of Old Testament exegesis, and lecturer on the Semitic languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic; born at Lyons, June 12, 1856; secondary studies at the *Lycee de Lyon*, collegiate studies in the universities of Geneva, Berlin, Heidelberg, and Paris; doctor of theology of the faculty of theology of the University of Paris, 1883; appointed professor to the faculty of theology of the University of Geneva, 1885; has traveled much, especially in South America; in Morocco made an expedition for scientific exploration; author of "The History of Christianity," and other works on Semitic languages, on Islam, and on the Old Testament.

MARY OF BETHANY

EDOUARD MONTET, D.D.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.
Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,
Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?
This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.
Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.
For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."—John 12 : 3-8.

THE action recorded of Mary of Bethany, which cannot fail to seem strange to Western minds and to folk of the twentieth century, must have produced a profound impression on the first disciples of Jesus, seeing that we read the story in all four gospels of the evangelists. It is not that the material fact of anointing, so frequently practised in the East, would create any surprise to those round about the Master. But the enthusiastic laudation by Jesus Christ of an action ordinary enough in itself, and the excessive praise which was not self-explanatory, must have

powerfully concentrated their minds on this religious enigma. Hence the divergences in the records which we possess of the transaction. Hence also the different interpretations which this incident has received, and the comments which have even modified and changed the circumstances of the event.

But these variations do not in the slightest degree diminish the irresistible attraction and captivating charm of this page of the gospel, which has so often impressed us by its immortal freshness, its pure and fervent enthusiasm, constituting a fountain whence our sentiment of religion has so often drawn that living water of which the Fourth Gospel speaks, and which evermore quenches our spiritual thirst.

In Bethany, called the place of poverty, was found the little circle of intimate friends upon whose fidelity Jesus could always count. It was at first that Simon who had been a leper, and at whose tables the Master did not disdain to sit. It was that Lazarus who later gave his name to the hamlet, that friend of Christ of whom amongst the crowd marvelous things were told. It was the sisters of Lazarus, it was Martha, always eager to serve Jesus, of whom she made herself the humble servant. It was Mary, that woman of the simple but fervent heart, who attached herself passionately to the steps of the Master to drink in His words and His teaching, and who

lost herself in the contemplation of Christ till she forgot all the world and especially forgot her own self. She so sincerely endeavored to efface herself that she has been taken for one unknown by some of the evangelists, and the writer of the Fourth Gospel, who has so exactly seized upon her character, and so highly respects her modesty, contents himself with describing her in these words: "Mary, she who anointed the Lord." In the midst of humble people, without pretensions, without learning, without great education, but also pure from corruption, free from vice, from the low and infamous sentiments of the contemporary aristocracy, Jesus felt Himself at home, amongst His own.

A cleansed leper, some peasants, certain of the common people, the apostles, various representatives of the lowest class of the multitudes—such are the guests that press round the Master at the table of Simon. We are at the eve of the crucifixion, only six days before Passover. It is a Saturday, probably March 28, in the year 33; on April 3, Jesus will perish on the cross. That is to say, the circumstances are solemn and saddening.

Jesus is served by Martha herself; Lazarus and his sisters partake of the feast; besides it is not rare in the East that a person who is attached to you by the bonds of affection (and this was the case of Martha for Jesus) follows you to wait upon you in the house to which

you have been invited. While the guests, reclining on the divans, eat as they lean on the left elbow, Mary goes to seek a very precious ointment which she possesses and returns to kneel at the Master's feet. There, breaking the neck of the flask which she holds in her hand, she pours forth its contents over the feet of Christ, which she covers with her hair, and the whole house is filled with the odor of the ointment.

The first inclination of the witnesses of this scene was to reproach Mary for her prodigality; it was not necessary to employ a pound of ointment of spikenard for anointing the feet of Jesus; the Master would have been as greatly honored, if Mary had been content to use only a portion. Judas, who filled the function of treasurer to the apostles, made himself the interpreter of this commonplace judgment. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" cried he. In truth this plea for the poor was a mere pretext on his part. Think of Judas professing solicitude for the poor at the very time when he was intriguing with the worst enemies of Jesus! He made a calculation as to what the ointment was worth. It was a large sum, and he bitterly lamented the loss—he who estimated the value of his Master at about twice the amount. The poor! But this was not the moment for him to trouble about them. And yet in that solemn hour

many were concerned who were indeed in want! Had not Jesus come to give help to the unfortunate? How restricted and how closed against the light of the gospel was the spirit of the apostles up to that hour!

Jesus must have experienced a feeling of bitter disillusion concerning His disciples, on hearing this judgment. But repressing the legitimate indignation awakened in Him by such unjust words concerning Mary, He contented Himself with saying to Judas: "Let her alone. She hath wrought a good work upon me. The poor ye have always with you, and when you wish you will be able to do good to them, but me ye have not always." And at the thought of His death, ever present to His mind, the anointing of Mary assumed one of the most elevating of symbolic meanings. "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial," added He. She, His friend, had embalmed His body beforehand; she had in advance performed this supreme duty with regard to which no one would show meanness. And appreciating at its true worth this testimony of love registered some days before His death, this pledge of profound attachment all the more precious because the rupture of these bonds of affection is imminent, He gives it as an example to His disciples present and to come, exclaiming: "Verily I say unto you, wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world,

there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

How could the apostles have forgotten these words and the scene of which they were like an epilog? How could they have remained insensible to the contrast which such words placed in evidence? Here was the trouble of the apostles, who were by no means ready to bestow on Him the royal anointing, and whom this dolorous announcement of death astonished, demoralized and crusht with the most profound consternation; it was caused by the serenity of Jesus, approving the last funerary preparations which Mary, without doubt or hesitation, had just devoted to Him in the shape of this final and solemn anointing as the crown of His life. Here was Judas, profiting by his title of apostle so as to effect a good business realization; there was Mary, all love for Jesus. Here, finally, the unanimous reproaches of the spectators belonging to that present generation, deaf and blind; there, the exaltation of Jesus and the praises of posterity. It needed a heart very withered, a religious sentiment very impoverished not to feel these things.

Features of the record which we have just analyzed deserve specially to attract our attention: the simplicity, the artlessness of faith, the vivacity of religious feeling and the ardent love in the face of Mary for Jesus.

Try, in fact, to unravel the secret move-

ments which agitate her heart, the impressions by which she is stirred, and which she would demonstrate to others and above all communicate to Jesus. You will find here at one and the same time a boundless admiration for the Savior, an ardent love for Him, an attachment, a devotion to His person that nothing could equal, and an eager need to express at a single stroke, without any hesitation which might be suspected of lukewarmness, this admiration, this love, this devotion, rendering them visible and tangible, so that the Master could see and touch them. The deeper the religious feeling is in a Christian, the more he doubts his ability adequately to translate it into intelligent expression, and the more he fears to weaken it, to attenuate it, to tarnish it in his effort to express it. Mary was that salt of the earth of which Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount; the savor of Christianity was in her: for nothing on earth would she have consented to have subjected it to the least commingling, much less would she have allowed it to be supposed by others that she was capable of using an atom of it.

What then shall she do in order to open to Jesus this heart that she gives Him, this conscience which thrills in unison with the gospel, which only demands to penetrate always more effectually and always more progressively into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, that conscience which only aspires to advance in

adoration and in faith? Shall she tread in the footsteps of the prophet, shall she celebrate with the psalmist the songs of thanks and of glorification? Shall she ask of Job the aid of his divine lyrism, in order to tell Jesus how she holds Him for her Master, her sovereign guide, her bread of life, her salvation? No, she knows that the Deborahs and the prophetesses have only been the exception in Israel; she will not depart from the modest but sacred rôle which suits womanhood; she is not ignorant that the most useful instrumentalities are not always the most brilliant, and that she is none the less appreciated by the Lord because she is less conspicuous. So she will follow her own inspirations. Her intentions are so holy that she does not think of the objections that she will excite, or of what will be said of her: to the pure all things are pure. Impatient to testify to Jesus the faith that animates her, she ponders upon the ointment that she possesses; it is evident that she has some of the most precious. Judas, who understands the matter, will value it at three hundred pence, that is all. The more the value of the gift, the greater will be that of the homage paid; to give that which is dearest to one is to render the greatest honor. Well, without asking what she could do more or better, she will go and take the vase containing the ointment, and approaching Jesus, will pour the contents upon that body which

soon will be exposed to cold contact with the sepulcher.

Poor woman, what illusions you have prepared! Poor innocent! You expected to see faces showing amazement, you believed even that perhaps tears would flow, when, before the guests invited to this funeral feast, you embalmed beforehand the body of Christ for the burial. You thought that you would be altogether understood by these apostles, whom Jesus had trained and who had lived in intimacy with Him, and that if the others remained insensible to the sad witness that you rendered to Christ, you would at least find favor in the eyes of the disciples! Undeceive yourself, Mary. The apostles themselves are without intelligence; their meager mind sees only useless expense, folly, vain prodigality and aimlessness in the impulse of your heart; they traffic against current coin the most delicate sentiments of your soul! And yet what should they not have had to learn of Mary of Bethany!

And we, we who so often trumpet forth the expression of our religious convictions! We who, in matters of religion, so often consult the opinion of the world, the dogmatic fashion of the day, the popular current of the moment! We so sensitive, when the gospel is concerned, to human estimates! What do I say—we who, like the apostles, appraise at the price of money moral actions, and weigh the most in-

timate feelings, and the consciences of others in equivalence of gold or bullion! We who, I am ashamed to confess it, have for the most part lost the frankness, the simplicity, the infantile charm of confidence in God, the springtide impulse of religious feeling! What have we not also to learn from Mary of Bethany?

From her let us learn above all to surrender ourselves entirely to God and to Christ. It is in this voluntary and absolute gift of her whole being to Christ, and, by His mediation, to God, that the rare merit and the high value of the anointing of Jesus by Mary consisted. It is because this woman witnessed to the essential duty of religion, that which contains and sums up all the obligations of religious law, that Jesus declared that wherever the gospel should be preached, there also should be celebrated the good deed of the sister of Lazarus. Such a promise, unique in the gospel, could only be applied to an exceptional action.

Mary was right: she had grasped the essentially new and fruitful principle of the gospel, she understood, in listening to the Master, in penetrating His instructions, in the living of His life, that Christianity is the religion of love. She could not be content with what sufficed for the best children of Israel; the severe monotheism, strictly moral of her ancestors did not satisfy her heart; the enthusiastic worship by the prophets of the Eternal

was no longer adequate; the Messianic hopes, the hope of the resurrection, so much spoken of amongst her contemporaries, could not any better fill the voids. She was a woman: that is to say she vindicated, with all the persuasive eloquence of the feminine heart, the rights which the heart possesses in virtue of the divine will, those rights which cannot be alienated from it, those rights which constitute the chief and the best privilege of life. She knew that nothing here below equals the affections of the heart; she could willingly repeat with the Song of Songs that love is strong as death, and she rightly reckoned that the best part of earthly life is also the best of celestial life. What happiness for her when she heard Jesus affirm the same truth, proclaiming that God is love, that religion is essentially love for God, and that there should be between us and God only the most tender relations and the most intimate affection! To give oneself to God without regrets, without restriction, without reservations of any kind, to give oneself to Him immediately without taking counsel of anyone; to give oneself to Christ, whom He has sent, His representative on earth, His well-beloved son; to give oneself to Christ by a decision of one's own will, still more by a spontaneous impulse of the heart; to give oneself to Christ and God, in order to submit to their holy will, to become perfect like the Father, to walk no more hence-

forth excepting by the light of the gospel in the path of salvation—this is how Mary understood the preaching of the Master, this is how she lived according to it!

Do we thus feel the preaching of Christ, and especially do we thus live according to His word? I am convinced that the comprehension of the gospel should be more profound among us, that we should understand better its spirit, that we should enter more intimately into the sense of the sacred text. But I am still less persuaded that we have made commensurate progress in evangelical life, that we have realized the imperious necessity, in order fully to act out the Christian life, of giving ourselves to God and to Christ. I fear that we too much resemble Bossuet who, preaching on the poor, at a time when more than ten thousand persons in a single province were dying of hunger, found nothing better to say with his eloquent voice than to prove the eminent dignity of the poor in the Church: and truly, that was not an occasion for expounding the mere letter of the gospel: it was to the heart, to the heart only that the preacher should have spoken.

Let our hearts speak. Ah! Who will restore life to our weary and burdened soul, loaded by the weight of material cares, and by the burdens not less heavy of moral sufferings? Who will restore life, that is to say the possibility of loving and of surrendering self, to

our hearts which this earthly life gradually withers day by day—to these hearts, slow to feel, slow to weep with those who weep, incapable of those spontaneous impulses under which one pours forth his soul into the soul of his brother? Who will restore life to our faith, who will restore its native freshness, the eternal youth which it would not have lost, if, as watchful guardians, we had defended it from access to the corruptions of the age?

That which will restore life to our faith is the gospel better felt and better lived; it is the gospel, not only embraced by our mind, but also by our heart; it is the gospel passing in us from the domain of the understanding into that of feeling, from the will into action.

That which will give life to our faith is imitation of the example of Mary. It is not necessary to be amongst simple ones and little ones in order to be able to assimilate this exquisite delicacy of the sentiment which Mary experienced in its simplicity. The kingdom of heaven has not been promised to the poor only: none are specially privileged to enter it. The heart may be as young, as poor, as loving, as enthusiastically holy in the aged as in the child; faith can be as absolute, as living, as ardent in the soul of the sage as in that of the unlearned man, because the heart of man is everywhere the same, no matter which step of the social ladder you may consider.

Let us then sacrifice to Christ and to God the most precious of our benefits; let us not fear, in order to give ourselves to God and to testify our love to Jesus, who has revealed Him to us, to place at the feet of our Creator and at those of our Savior, the most precious treasures that we possess. Alas! for the greater part of us it will not be an ointment worth three hundred pence: it will be our passions and our self-esteem!

MOORE

THE CONSCRIPT CROSS-BEARER

EDWARD CALDWELL MOORE

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THE CONSCRIPT CROSS-BEARER

PROF. EDWARD C. MOORE, D.D.

"And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross."—Mark 15 : 21.

THIS is one of the little touches in the story of the crucifixion which it would be easy for us quite to overlook. The climax overshadows everything. Our minds, like the feet of the crowd which followed Jesus, hurry to the issue. The tide which is rushing toward that great event drags us also with it, just as it seized the people of that quarter of Jerusalem and swept them up the slope of Calvary, with no thought but of one person and one awful spectacle. Later, we discover that, as often under great excitement, we had noted many things we did not know we noticed. So is it here. In truth, it seems to me that there are in the whole gospel few more touching and instructive episodes than this one of the Cyrenian who, at that moment of Christ's need, by chance came by.

He is mentioned in three gospels. Some things that are said of him suggest that he was, later on, a follower of Jesus. The manner of his mention here makes plain he

was no follower as yet. He was just passing by, when they laid hold on him. He was going into the city as the rabble with the Sufferer came out. He may have had knowledge of Jesus and no interest in Him. He may have had very little knowledge. He was a foreigner, a Jew by name but African by residence. There were hosts of Jews engaged in business in Egypt and thence westward now three hundred years, since Alexander gave the race commercial privileges which the Ptolemies and the Romans never took away. This man's family may have been for generations thus merchants in self-chosen exile, and not pining much in exile. There were strangers from Cyrene present at the Pentecost a few weeks after the crucifixion. There was a synagog of the Cyrenians in Jerusalem. This man may have been attending one of the few feasts of his lifetime in the sacred city of his nation. Or he may have been a man who did not trouble much the feasts and synagogs.

He was coming out of the country in most natural fashion, intent upon his own affairs. He was perhaps no more than curious about this mob which was going out to see an execution. He must have been astonished and indignant thus to be laid hold of. The word is a rough one. It is the word for impressing a man into the service. It is to be taken in all its harsh literalness, no doubt.

The man to be executed often added this to

his torment and humiliation, that he had to carry on his own back the rough beam on which he was to suffer. John says Jesus went forth thus bearing His cross. After a time perhaps, overwrought, His strength had yielded. He had faltered, may be fallen, underneath the load. There was no time to look about for one of Jesus' followers, to force him to do the service. I fear none was nigh. Any back would do. But the mere man of the rabble never gets this sort of thing on his back. And so it was, I fancy, that this clean-washed, neutral stranger, on his little morning journey, found himself one moment well at the roadside, a mere spectator, and the next dragged by some mailed hand into the midst, faced sharp about and forced to follow Jesus with that accursed beam upon his neck. After all, Jesus was hardly to blame. The crowd jeered if Simon showed discomfiture. One might as well remonstrate with wild beasts as with the soldiers. What was to be done? What but to go on, to get done, and, soon as possible, to slip away?

Imagine for this man any relation to Jesus that you choose, it was a trying experience. It was most trying if he had had no relation. So far as we know, nothing could have been farther from Simon's purpose for himself. Few things could have been less characteristic, so far as he yet understood his own character. And here, right out of the even tenor

of his chosen way, there has seized him bodily this absolutely unexpected force. Here he is, Simon of Cyrene, toiling up Calvary after Jesus, with that strange thing, the latter's cross, upon his neck.

Now the lot of this all but unknown man would not be worth to us the time that we have spent in trying to imagine it, were it not for the fact that it seems to me to picture, in most interesting and suggestive fashion, the lot and life of many a man and woman whom we have known, to illuminate some fragment of experience which we may ourselves have had.

It suggests, namely—this story of the Cyrenian—a holy and spiritual interpretation of some events in our lives, of certain whole aspects of those lives. They were unexpected events, they were forced, unwelcome aspects, when they came. They have continued unmeaning, tho they have been long time with us. They bid fair to remain unfruitful, tho we should carry them to the end of our days. Perhaps they have continued unmeaning and unfruitful to us because we have persisted in regarding them as merely the net result of the misfortunes, the stupidities and iniquities of our fellow-men, instead of seeing, as we might, that in these very things we are being suffered to bear after Him a part of the true cross of Jesus Christ. For what was the cross of Jesus Christ, in one way of looking at

it, but just the net result of the misfortunes, the stupidities, the iniquities of his fellow-men? And who are we that we should feel ourselves thus injured at being asked to bear a part? We might come to healing of our own torn souls and reconciliation with a mysterious hard lot, we might come to joy in it and be glorified through it, did we but realize that what has happened to us is precisely what befel this Simon, when he was so unceremoniously compelled to put his flinching shoulders and his bewildered and rebellious spirit under the Lord's load.

A good part of the load in life which serious men and women find themselves carrying was not created by themselves, it was not due to themselves, it was not chosen for themselves. Do I not accurately describe the case when I say they find themselves carrying it? This load was not created by Simon, it was not due to Simon, it was not chosen of Simon. He found himself carrying it. For that matter it was not created by Jesus, it was not due to Jesus. But you will say to me that it was, at least, freely chosen for Himself of Jesus. He was not simply caught under the load of the misfortunes and iniquities of His fellow-men, He had the insight and the courage freely to accept His cross before He came to it. And that makes a difference. Yes, and His followers have learned to do even that after Him. But sometimes, apparently, God asks no

harder thing of you and me than this, that we shall have the insight and the courage to accept our cross after we get it. Get a good deal of it we shall, anyway, if we are true men and women, this cross hewn by the mistakes, the miseries and sins of men. Get a good deal of it, I say, we shall anyway, if there is any manhood in us. So that what we choose, after all, is merely this, whether we ourselves shall be curst or else blest and glorified in the bearing of it.

Or let us look at the matter in another way. This story of what happened to the Cyrenian affords us some rational and natural and everyday explanation of what we mean by the phrase, "the cross of Christ." The phrase through much use has often become hackneyed and conventional. Jesus laid great stress upon the thought. We are sure it is a thing we ought to do, to take up some cross. But we have most vague and mythological notions as to how it is to be done. Superficial people talk most arrant platitudes. They manufacture some absurdity. They put this holy name upon some trivial and artificial thing. They rack imagination and bring forth some small asceticism. Zealots do unreal and unnecessary things, bigots even wrong ones, and call that the bearing after Him of the cross of Jesus Christ. And all the while the grand course of life has been trying to force on us something which perhaps we never thought of

save as an imposition upon us, our ill-luck, blunder or badness of somebody in which we have got tangled, violence, wrong, even if unintentional, which someone has done us. We are still animated by the paltry hope that some day we shall give the soldiers the slip, or even get redress. We have spent a good part of our life in trying to be rid of this burden. Or, we have gone on bearing it grimly, embittered against men, and all the space dark between us and God.

I have seen men and women do this thing grandly, bear loads for men in general and men in particular, for parents unfortunate, brothers foolish, friends treacherous, or even wicked—loads which they neither had part in making nor could escape part in bearing. I bow in reverence before them. But all the time my heart goes out to them. They do not seem to know what they are doing. They do not realize that this was just what Jesus did, and that in thus doing, they most closely follow Him. They probably have manhood and womanhood enough not to say anything. But in their hearts, at least in tired moments and by wakeful nights, they dwell on the gross injustice which was done them. They cannot forget that they have been rudely laid hold of. They were passing innocent along the road. They have been by unseen and unloved hands compelled. It rankles. It rankles enough to make men and women who bear

grandly all their lives just miss the transfiguration of their own characters, the glorification of their own spirits, which ought to go therewith.

Do not you know men and women who have carried just as much lumber up a lifelong Calvary, have set their shoe soles in the still warm footprints of the Christ of God, and hardly got more good out of it, just now, you might say, than one of the thieves? It cannot fail but that they will get that good by and by, in that day when all eyes are opened. But one could mourn for them, whoever they may be, that they do not get that blessedness now. So near is the glory of life to some who do not seem to know it. So far is it from some who prate most about it but shun these galling loads.

The Christian life is, at bottom, no new life which we lead after we are converted. It is rather, a new and noble and blessed way of looking at the same old life which, if we are half way true men and women, we have to lead in any case. And the cross of Christ is no pious decoration of our existence which we carpenter together or cast of gold and set with sharp points of steel and put next our skin. Nay, but it is the same old bloody, wooden thing which the weakness, folly, wickedness of mankind has been forever creating, and the true part of mankind has been forever carrying, and the one perfect Man bore perfectly,

happily, triumphantly, and longs only to teach us how to do the same.

The same heavy wood is with us still. I think that one day we shall give thanks, that, as Paul put it, there are things behind of the sacrifice of Christ which we are to fill up. I think that some day we shall give thanks that we took life as it was, or rather that life took us as we were. The soldiers dragged us whither we were not wise enough or had not sufficient grace to wish to go. So much of the meaning of life opens to us only as life opens. And all is good that opens life to us. Ah, they were our ministers, those soldiers who took us by the throat, the mob who jeered at us, the clean people who got behind us. They did not exactly mean us the good. But now that we are calm we see also that they did not mean us all the harm. They were our ministers, I say, and we could pour out our thanks to them, only, I fear, they might not understand. Surely the day came when the Cyrenian gave thanks to God for nothing so much, as that the brave Christ's flesh proved, for a moment, insufficient, and that, at that moment, he, Simon, chanced to be passing by.

And now I think that you will have seen coming all the rest that I have to say. Almost I am of divided mind, whether it is better to draw examples or to let you draw them for yourselves. Your own are best. You are a man whose bit of wood, dropt from the shoul-

ders of the Christ, and forced on you in the rough soldiering of life, goes back to your very youth. It weighed on your sensitive spirit when you were a child. You wanted an education, you had a right to a start in business, an opening in a loved profession. And the money which should have gone into that, may be God did not let your father earn, or let him earn and lose. And may be that was part of his cross, that he could not do for you as he hoped. And you and he might clasp hands over that bit of wood instead of misunderstanding one another as perhaps you have done.

Or somebody was a fool or wicked and squandered that money, or frittered away a commercial or personal influence, forfeited a reputation. Some family shame overshadows us, some sin or crime is committed by one to whom we ought always to have been able to refer with pride. Somebody's over sanguine temperament in business and loose sense of responsibility involves a whole wide circle in lawsuit or indebtedness. Somebody's towering and unscrupulous ambition, or again somebody's sheer inefficiency, improvidence, laziness or plain vice, piles up loads of obligations which almost break the faithful souls to earth. Sickness, misery, fall within our circle so closely that even the world says, there is something for you manfully to bear. Sickness, misery, misfortune, fall outside

what we have called our circle, but which somebody has to bear. You see, it is only a matter of the size of the circle and the strength of the carrying sense. And Christ was only He to whom the whole race was but the circle of His brethren, and every mortal wo lay on His willing heart.

You will feel that I have described not some lives, but some aspect of every life which rises into seriousness or worthiness of any sort. And that is true. That is only to say what I have said before, that the opportunity of Christliness almost forces itself upon us so soon as our eyes are open to see. Every true man or woman knows the sensation, knows the shame which for affection's sake we tenderly cover, knows the patience called for by the faults of those we should revere, knows the burden which is borne for those who cannot, and sometimes even for those who will not, bear it for themselves, knows the complication and annoyance, lifelong pain and embarrassment into which somebody's thoughtlessness, vanity, obstinacy, may have plunged a whole connection, knows the debts that must be paid, the weakness that must be shielded, the wrongs that, so far as may be, must be atoned for, the wretched consequences that must be kept from others, must be taken quietly upon ourselves. That is life to those who deeply live.

Jest has been made of the fact alleged that

there is enough wood of the true cross in Europe alone to build several ships. The jest is a sorry underestimate. Of the real stuff of the true cross, of the kind of material we have just been speaking of, there has been enough to give to every man and woman, every child, in every generation since the Christ, a good large piece. And so far as one can judge, there will be enough to last till Christ shall come again.

You stand by the wayside some bright morning of your life. We all do it in our turn. Fresh from your rest in the country, you are going into the city of your choice, perchance to worship in some synagog or offer in the high temple, as befits your state. So stood the Cyrenian. And he wist not of what sort the offering and worship of that day should be.

You are intent on business, your own profitable, pleasant business. Has not every man a right to his own successful business? And what a monstrous wrong it is that all the wretched business of others should be made into a load for you to bear. You have your own clear right and privileges, your own bright plans. So had the Cyrenian. He had no idea what his real business and privilege of that day should be.

And suddenly someone starts out of the crowd. You have hardly time to know what it is all about, no questions asked, no remon-

strance heeded. Resistless hands are on you. The tide of the world is bearing you along with it. It would all seem a bad dream were it not for the plain duty, too prosaic and urgent to admit of being dreamed about. You never proposed to do it. But you are going to do it. You are too much of a man, too true a woman not to do it. There is that responsibility. It was not you who incurred it. But it is you who are going to have to carry it. There are the consequences which you even warned your friend against. There is that unending patience to be shown, that unfaltering faithfulness to be manifested, there is that wisdom to be exercised, loved, cherished, even against greatest odds. There is the wood. And there is the Christ going before us, bearing what He can of all the burden of the world, and leaving behind Him just enough to make all men great and Christlike if they will but follow in His steps. Perhaps you never said that you were going to follow Him. But you will. You are too much of a man not to. You may not have called your following by that name. That makes but little difference. It is the Christ that goes before us in all noblest human life. And we follow Him when we do nobly bear.

And now, are we going to accept this interpretation of the things that have been wearing upon us? Shall we not let all the rebellion in our hearts be healed, and then go out to

take up those tasks again, rejoicing in Christ as we had never done before?

We noted at the start that trait in our text which makes us feel reasonably sure that this Simon stood near to the Christian circle, later on. Mark, writing for that circle, brings his man forward out of all uncertainty with one swift stroke—" the father of Alexander and Rufus "—he it was whom they compelled to bear the cross. He assumes that these names are well known to his readers. One cannot help letting his imagination play with this fact. Simon's sons would seem to have been Christians, and his family one of standing among the supporters of Christ's cause. Does it seem unlikely that the father was a Christian from that April day?

I think that at the first he meant, when, with the cross, he should have reached the top of Calvary, to slip away. I think that as he watched the holy Sufferer the world was changed. I think that the clean rebellious man whom we saw at the foot of the hill, Simon of Cyrene, was all changed. I think that the soiled and stricken man, believing and transfigured, that crucifixion evening, would not have changed his lot with that of any man on earth. It was a strange way to become a follower of Jesus, was it not? And yet I am sure the like has happened since. I think that through the mist of years and dust of other services, he looked back to that

morning and to the violence then done him, as the pinnacle of mortal privilege and only wondered why the heavenly privilege should have fallen just to him. I think he was reconciled.

But you will say to me it is easier to be reconciled to my own cross than to that part of it which projects into my children's lives. It is easy to see the spiritual profit for me. But what of them? That is the last straw upon the weight of many a man's cross. You think on some fair morning as you go into the city, that the blessing for your children will lie in the fortune that you make for them, in the position, public or social, that you win. You are often thinking of them far more than of yourself when you say you cannot bear this cross. "My father, there is the wood for the burnt offering, but where is the lamb?" said little Isaac. "My son, God will provide himself a lamb," said Abraham. But who shall say what was in his heart as he looked at his only boy?

Oh, my friend, those things we named are good—sometimes. But I do also know that there is no heritage on earth like that which those children do enjoy who have seen their father or mother go bravely up life's Calvary with the cross of Christ upon their backs. I think they would not change the lot. I think they are reconciled. It is rather a strange way of ensuring that one's children will be

followers of Jesus. But it is rather a common way, and rather sure. Never fear. Your Alexander and Rufus will bless you. And the world will have cause to bless your Alexander and Rufus. The world will never know—there are many things which the world need never know—that it all goes back, this grace and benediction which those lives have been, that it all goes back to a morning when you were dragged from your vantage by the highway, as Christ passed to be crucified so long ago. But in the stillness of your heart you may know, and in that will be happiness enough for earth and almost enough for heaven.

My friends, these things are a parable. We think our crosses wooden. It is we who are wooden and do not see. We curse men when we ought to be blessing God. We are cast down when we should be lifted up. Let us have done. Let us appreciate that what then in the wood could happen to but one man, may happen, in the spirit of it, to every soul of us, to be allowed to bear after Him a little of the burden of the true cross of Jesus Christ.

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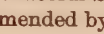

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